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THE JAIL EXPERIENCES IN 1916,

BY J. S. MACHAR

AUTHORISED TRANSLATION FROM THE CZECH
BY P. SELVER

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INTRODUCTION

Among the many interesting and talented Czech writers of today J. S. Machar occupies a foremost place. He has succeeded in gaining popular favour without sacrificing his literary ideals. He is always in close touch with the events of the day, upon which he comments fearlessly and often drastically. He is, in fact, not merely a literary celebrity but a national personality, whose opinions meet with interest, if not always with agreement, among a wide circle of readers in Czechoslovakia.

J. S. Machar was born at Kolín in 1864. He was educated at Prague where he underwent all the privations of a needy student. The death of his father in 1881 left him unprovided for, and he eked out a livelihood by giving lessons, and from 1882 onwards, when his first verses were printed in the periodical "Světozor", by literary work. Already during this early period of his life we find him obliged to change schools on account of his religious views, the free expression of which brought him into conflict with the instructor in divinity. After passing his school-leaving examination, he spent a year in the army, and was then enrolled as a student of law. His legal studies, however, were confined to this formal enrolment, and he remained in the army until his appointment as an official of the "Bodenkreditanstalt" in Vienna. He occupied this inappropriate post for thirty years until the events described in "The Jail". When the independent Czechoslovak State was founded in the autumn of 1918, Machar became a member of the National Assembly. Later on he was appointed inspector general of the Czechoslovak army, and he is still continuing in this capacity.

Machar's first book, "Confiteor" was published in 1887. It consists of lyric poems, the tone of which is sentimental, romantic, scep-

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tical and ironical by turns. To a certain extent they suggest the influence of Heine and the Russian Byronists, but they are sufficiently subjective to acquit Machar of being a mere copyist of other poets' emotions. The second and third parts of "Confiteor" appeared in 1889 and 1892 respectively, and from then onwards Machar, with his reputation fully established, issued numerous volumes both in verse and prose. In the "Summer, Winter, Spring and Autumn Sonnets", published between 1891 and 1893, Machar reveals the same dual capacity as lyric poet and ironical observer as in his earlier books, together with technical skill in imparting variety to the sonnet form. "Tristium Vindobona" (1893) is a book of elegies, in whose title Machar suggests an analogy between Ovid, exiled among the Goths, and himself, performing uncongenial duties in the anti-Czech atmosphere of Vienna. It should here be mentioned that Machar's attitude towards nationalism is not narrow and chauvinistic. He has always severely condemned the false patriotism which parades beneath empty catchwords and is without true human ideals, but he is also a decided opponent of social injustice, and for that reason he was always a severe critic of the Viennese authorities for their treatment of the Czechs. Machar's hatred of social injustice was the dominant motive in his next two books of poems, "Here roses ought to bloom" and "Magdalena", both published in 1894, and both concerned with the position of woman in human society. The former book consists of a series of "lyric dramas" depicting various phases in the lives of women, in which sombre colours predominate. The melancholy tone of this book recurs in "Magdalena", a narrative poem dealing with the problem of the fallen woman who attempts to live down her past, but is defeated by the petty traditions of a provincial town. Among Machar's miscellaneous collections of verse may be mentioned "The Warriors of God", the ironical title of a

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volume of incisive and epigrammatic political satire which followed in 1897, and the "Satiricon" of 1904, which is similar in character.

The publication of "Golgotha" in 1901 marks the beginning of a new series of poems, upon which Machar has worked intermittently ever since. He is now no longer concerned with the personal emotions of his earlier lyrical period, but is attracted by the collective destinies of mankind as displayed in the drama of history. But Machar's conception of historical characters and events is nevertheless often strongly affected by his personal bias. Thus, "In the Glow of the Hellenic Sun" and "The Poison from Judaea", both published in 1906, by their very titles indicate Machar's sympathies for classical antiquity on the one hand, and his anti-clerical sentiments on the other. During the year 1911 they were followed in rapid succession by "The Barbarians" (early Middle Ages), "The Pagan Flames" (renaissance) and "The Apostles" (reformation period). No further additions to the series have yet been published.

This gallery of historical portraits and perspectives deserves special notice by reason of the vividness with which Machar has reconstructed scenes and depicted figures from the most diverse periods and of the most diverse types. Taken as a whole it forms an outlined epic of mankind's development, the component parts of which are short but often extremely effective dramas. Thus, "On Golgotha" in the first volume of the series, is a graphic and unconventional narrative of Christ's crucifixion, written in blank verse of great poetical beauty. Machar himself says that the music of Beethoven was ringing within him when he wrote this poem, and this well accounts for the stately cadences in which the scene is enacted to its unrelenting conclusion. And without analysing in detail the series as a whole, it is sufficient to refer in general terms to the admirable manner in which Machar visualises Babylonian kings, Chinese chron-

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iclers, Greek tyrants, Roman emperors, Popes, savage invaders, poets, painters, and soldiers, and in a few firm strokes presents their leading characteristics.

As a prose-writer Machar also ranks very high in Czech literature. Here again we find the same polemical tendencies, the same bold criticism of social and political shams, and, it must be added, the same unsparing self-revelation. For instance, "The Confession of a Literary Man" (1901) is Machar's autobiography, in which he depicts his youth and manhood with sardonic frankness. One of his most famous prose works is "Rome", prompted by his violent aversion to Catholicism and its adherents. Much of Machar's prose writing consists of newspaper feuilletons commenting upon topics of the day, and it is probably these which have gained him the greatest number of readers. Yet however trifling the subject in itself, the vigorous style in which it is discussed invests it with a more than transient interest.

Machar's record as an author reveals him as a personality of unswerving courage. In the course of his career he has not flinched from wounding the national susceptibilities of his fellow-countrymen when he considered that the interests of truth demanded it. He has lost friends and made enemies by the uncompromising expression of his views. It was inevitable that such a man should come into contact with the Austrian authorities during the war, and it is the various incidents connected with his supervision and imprisonment which form the subject of "The Jail". Here we have all manifestations of the typical Machar, — his strong human sympathies, his psychological insight, his courage, his candour, his sarcasm, his humour, his dramatic instinct and his faculties for describing places, persons and events. But the qualities of the book are so obvious that they do not need to be indicated further. It is enough to add

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that "The Jail" has a two-fold value, — as a piece of literature and as a historical document. On either score it was worth translating into English, — the double merit made its translation an urgent duty, which it has been a pleasure to fulfil.

London, March 10th 1921.

P. Selver.

I.

TAILOR: Hi! hist! hi, neighbour, a word with you!

CARPENTER: Go your way, and leave me in peace.

TAILOR: Only a word. Is there nothing new?

CARPENTER: Nothing except that it is forbidden to speak of anything new.

TAILOR: How is that?

CARPENTER: Step up to this house. Take care! Straightway upon his arrival the Duke of Alba had an order issued by which two or three who speak together in the street are declared guilty of high treason without a trial.

TAILOR: Alas, preserve us!

CARPENTER: Under pain of life-long imprisonment it is forbidden to speak of affairs of state.

TAILOR: Alas for our liberty!

CARPENTER: And under pain of death nobody shall say aught against the actions of the Government.

TAILOR: Alas for our lives!

CARPENTER: And fathers, mothers, children, relatives, friends and servants are invited with a promise of great things to divulge to a specially established court what goes on within the very household.

TAILOR: Let us get home.

CARPENTER: And the obedient are promised that they shall suffer no injury either to body, or honour, or possessions.

TAILOR: How merciful! Why I supposed — etc. etc. According to Goethe's "Egmont" this scene was enacted at Brussels in the year 1567, but it was enacted in reality on countless occasions in the lands of the Bohemian crown in the years 1915 to 1916.

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It can safely be asserted that time after time in the course of the last 300 years our nation was afflicted by persecutions as other countries by earthquakes. A very thorough-going persecution fell to our lot immediately after the battle of the White Mountain ; it was a persecution which might be called an imperial one. It was aimed at the rebellious lords, but the Czech nation almost breathed its last as a result of it. And it was the first misfortune, — not for us, since nations always outlive their dynasties, — but for those who carried it out. A river of blood began to flow between them and us, — and such blood never dries up. The persecution which followed it was also interesting, and might be called a religious one. It is interesting because it has been described with considerable vividness by Jirásek* in his magnificent work entitled "Temno" (Gloom). Its victims were books and people whose confession of faith was different from that prescribed by the holy Roman Catholic Church ; and this again was a misfortune for the Church — the Hussite spirit had always smouldered amongst us under the ashes. — the holy Church made efforts to keep it smouldering. The subsequent persecution which might be compared with a continual earthquake, because it lasted long over a hundred years, was a persecution by the lords, and was directed against the serfs. Jirásek, Svátek** and others have also written interesting accounts of it. It is true that it did not fall upon the nation as a whole, but on the other hand, an enormous number of individuals were its victims. The persecution by Metternich was one of the mildest. It was directed not only against us Czechs, but against all the nations in Austria, and indeed, against a large part of Europe. It was milder because

* Alois Jirásek (born 1851), a prominent Czech writer whose historical novels are particularly famous.

** Josef Svátek (1835—1897), a Czech historical novelist.

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it allowed people freedom of movement; they were permitted to eat, drink, sleep, keep awake, dance, swim, walk, skate etc. — but to make up for this their spirits were enclosed in a dark room where windows and doors were blocked up so as to prevent light and fresh air from getting in. That is the reason why the wretched literature of our renaissance is so tame, and our revivalists such timid creatures. The soul needed neither to see nor to hear, — its only desire had to be: To be a good subject of its overlord. After the year 1848 began the political persecution which brought Havlíček^{*} to Brixen, dismissed inconvenient officials and teachers, confiscated books, suppressed newspapers, locked up editors, sent strict governors to Prague, brought Czech people before German judges, and also continued for a respectable number of years, proceeding sometimes more severely, sometimes only leniently, sometimes vanishing for a period after which, having rested, it immediately began afresh. And so we experienced the persecution in the years 1915 — 1916, which might be designated as a military persecution.

It is certain that the human spirit which contrives to expound accurately all the periods of ancient Roman history, and bears in mind the dynasties of ancient Egypt, will very easily forget the events of those preceding years. And that is a mistake, for "this year" grows out of "last year", and those who have forgotten last year, can easily form a thoroughly false idea of the present year. It is therefore desirable that everything in our memories should be continually kept fresh so that it cannot be forgotten. And in the first place we, who have a little to do with it, must speak, we must make

* Karel Havlíček (1821-1856), a famous Czech political and satirical author, both in prose and verse. In 1851 he was arrested by the Austrian Government, and interned at Brixen in Tyrol where he remained until the year before his death.

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known our impressions for the purpose of supplying reliable material for the history of these two years. Yes, provisions must be made for our historians.

The frame-work is something like this : At the outbreak of war the late Emperor surrendered a part of his authority as a ruler to the military staff, whose main representatives, in addition to the commander-in-chief, Archduke Friedrich, were Conrad von Hötzendorf, Marshal Metzger and Colonels Slameczka and Gregori. The general staff applied its watchful eye not only to the enemy outside, but, as is of course natural, also to the mischief-makers within. And then was made that tragic error which had far-reaching results. On the erroneous assumption that, when war was declared against the only three foreign Slav states, Austria-Hungary, a group of States with a majority of Slav races, would not meet with assent to, and appropriate enthusiasm for war among its Slav majority, — when war was declared against the only three foreign Slav States, although that majority, as the mobilisation showed, loyally rendered unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, the general staff began to look with mistrust upon the Slav nationalities, later also upon its Italian subjects and later still upon the Roumanians, and blaming the former civilian administration, — it existed only in name, having become the obedient helper of the military authorities during the war, — for lax patriotic training, defectively inculcated Austrianism, tolerated particularism, careless lenience in dynastic and religious affairs, blindness towards all kinds of centrifugal tendencies, it undertook this training itself, and desired to carry it out in the military manner, — quickly and thoroughly. Certainly, one other circumstance was very significant in its eyes. In the German Reichstag, Bethmann-Hollweg made a speech in which he referred to "the reckoning between the Germanic and Slavonic race", a phrase to which

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no contradiction was forthcoming from Austria, with its Slav majority. The three Counts, Tisza, Berchtold and Stürgkh were silent; silent too were the nationalities fighting beneath the two-headed eagle against the Russians, Serbs and Montenegrins, — and this silence must have been noticed by the military authorities, — again, an erroneous assumption which accentuated the tragic error; the leading Counts had probably overlooked the Chancellor's remark, and the Austrian nations could not become articulate, — there was no Parliament, there was no public platform. But this silence was regarded as malice and a token of secret hostility towards the position of the Empire.

And so the patriotic training began. In the kingdom of Bohemia, in Galicia, in Croatia, Dalmatia, — everywhere the military showed the civilian administration what it had neglected, and how things ought to be done. A new spirit was introduced into the schools and among the teachers. Reading books which contained a reference to the kingdom of Bohemia were confiscated ; the emblems of the territories of the Bohemia crown, — confiscated ; national colours, whether on clothes, on match-boxes, on bags of confectionery, — forbidden; popular tunes and national songs, as ancient and innocent as the live-long day, were forbidden ; collections of songs were seized, books, old miscellanies, verse, prose were also seized ; newspapers appeared full of blank spaces, and published articles supplied to them by the police ; they had to publish them too, in a prominent spot under pain of immediate suppression ; and they appeared, only to be suppressed in the end after all ; suspicious people, — oh, the gallant governors, the gendarmes and the Government police had a tremendous amount of work to do then ! — were taken away and interned in concentration camps ; recruits had a Uriah-like p. v.

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(politisch verdächtig)* inscribed on their military papers and these two letters ensured their bearers a continual strict control and other agreeable attentions upon all battle-fronts, whether in Russia, in Serbia, in Roumania, in Italy; people of all classes and ranks lived under continual police observation; taverns, cafés, theatres, public places swarmed with police spies, and espionage penetrated even into families; there was a deluge of anonymous accusations on all sides, and as a result of them, cross-examinations, domiciliary searches, arrests and imprisonments took place; childish leaflets were, heaven alone knows how, circulated among the peaceful population, and it fared ill with anyone of whom it could be proved that he had possessed, read or even only looked at anything of the kind; all civilian rights were suspended, there were no personal liberties, there were no constitutional liberties, there were only military tribunals and they worked as they were obliged to work; Czech people were tried and sentenced by judges who did not know a single word of Czech; nobody was safe either by day or night, there was a deluge of halters, life-long terms of imprisonment, hundreds and hundreds of years of jail, confiscation of property; those who were locked up included women, students, female clerks, authors, members of parliament, bank managers, officials of the most diverse branches, grocers, workmen, journalists, clergymen of all denominations, — everybody was under suspicion, the whole nation was under suspicion. Thus literally as at Brussels in the year 1567.

A sultry stillness settled upon the whole kingdom of Bohemia. Cowards began to accommodate themselves to the prevailing conditions, and met the rule of terror halfway. People with firm backbones repeated the words of Talleyrand: Everything in the world can be proved by means of bayonets, but it is impossible to sit on

* Politically suspicious.

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them. Let us believe and hope that this will pass. At Prague anecdotes and jokes came into being, and with the rapidity of light they sped through Bohemia and Moravia, evoking smiles from the faces of a nation which had become unaccustomed to mirth. Slowly but firmly there developed a feeling of national solidarity, an instinct for national honour and national justice, and joyous hopes grew like wisps of fresh grass underneath a heavy boulder.

But all this took place quietly and in secret. Outwardly, it was burdensome to breathe, the atmosphere was full of horrible uncertainty. If anyone counted upon the enforced outbreak of a revolt, after which it would have been possible to have recourse to still more violent measures, those who so counted, suffered a disappointment. The nation held its peace.

No persecution since that following the battle of the White Mountain was more cruel than this military one carried out in the kingdom of Bohemia in the years 1915-1916; both of them are worthy of each other, and in fact our persecution is a new epitome of all persecutions to which we have been subjected during the last 300 years.

Today we hope that it was the last persecution, just as that in Brussels in the year 1567. Errors in policy are a crime, and every crime brings a fearful revenge in its wake.*

II.

— — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —
— — — — — — — — — — — — — — — —
— — but as long as in Galicia — — — — — — —

* The greater part of this chapter having been deleted by the censor, the author was induced to write the following chapter.

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nevertheless — — — — — At the Hernalser Gürtel
— — — — — circular tower — — —
etc. My readers saw how the first chapter of my "Jail" was deleted
last week by the censor, — the Hernalser Gürtel throughout its
existence has never really been so clean, and I should very much
enjoy sending there the responsible authorities concerned with their
craze for cleanliness. — — — and when I saw the number in question,
my first feeling was one of joy; so the censor is not dead, on
the contrary, he is working, and that is a proof that — — —
— — — it thereupon occurred to me that if this went on, I
should prepare my "Jail" for the censor alone, and my readers
would see very little of it. So I determined that I would wait until
— — — — — and then I would write my
"Jail". Then in order to show my readers what the second chapter
and the remainder would look like, I censored then myself, and
I am inquisitive to know whether our beloved censor will nevertheless
discover some connection between the fragments of sentences
that are left and the endangered interests of the state, and whether
he will swallow up still more of them.

— — — — —
— — — — —
I can wait — — — — — one of us — — —
and then — — — — — celebrations in Prague
— — — obituary.

II.*

As long as the Russians remained in Galicia and Count Thun was acting as governor in Prague, the persecution did not venture to make any steady advance, as it were. Now and then it seized hold of some old huxter-woman, of whom it had been ascertained that she had told people how close the Russians already were, and that they would be "here" within a fortnight, — she had been told so by some tramp or other, — the old woman received, I believe, 14 months. Or, an official person, a constable or a police-agent was walking along the street and in the second storey of a house heard somebody scraping away at his violin practice, — practice indeed? That is the Russian hymn, — and nothing was of any avail, the pupil-teacher could explain this and that, and call upon the whole of heaven as a witness, the official person said Russian hymn, — and the pupil-teacher received 8 months. But the persecution was still, so to speak, only dallying, — as if a hungry tiger were catching flies. It gave a grab with its paw only occasionally if some large object came into its vicinity; the news could then be read in the papers that this or that well-known person "had moved" to Vienna. But an oppressive uncertainty had already settled upon the land of Bohemia.

After the break-through at Gorlice, all was changed. They began to coax Prince Thun into believing that he was seriously ill; his

* Man is a reed shaken by the wind! I vowed to myself and also declared that, after the deletion to which my first chapter fell a prey, I would not continue with "The Jail", — and behold, as soon as I received the news that fresh and capable persons had entered the Prague censorship, I am writing again after all.

Truly, a reed shaken by the wind!

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sight was weak, they said, and was being impaired by his official duties at so responsible a spot. The Prince denied this energetically but vainly. He did actually fall ill and retired.

On May 21st, 1915, Dr. Kramář was arrested. He "moved" to Vienna.

A day or so after that I was travelling to Prague for the Whitsuntide holidays. In the train I met Deputy Choc. We still knew nothing about it. We talked of this and that, until suddenly it occurred to Choc that Hofrat So-and-so was travelling in the same carriage with us, and that he would go to him and discover the latest news. He soon came back; he had promised to say nothing, but he would tell me, — they had arrested Kramář. Said I, that is impossible. — Yes, the Hofrat declares it is so. — We were silent for a while. Then I pointed out to him that this would be a harakiri of Austrian policy in Bohemia; that everyone knew how consistent an advocate of that policy Dr. Kramář had been in the last fifteen years; that no Viennese Government could be so short-sighted as to do anything of the kind; that Dr. Kramář was persona grata in all Viennese circles, — Choc only shrugged his shoulders; the Hofrat had declared it was so.

From the train the field of Lipan could be seen. The sky above it had reddened, and into this blood-like expanse towered up mournfully the black hill with the gloomy monument to Prokop the Great. We looked at it. "Well then, we shall all have our turn" I remarked to Choc.

"We shall, never mind".

In the meanwhile, the Hofrat's secret was known to the whole of Prague. And in a considerably enlarged edition. Altogether, nowhere had so many legends come into existence as at Prague in those two years. On the very same evening I heard it definitely asserted

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that the whole of the National Council had been removed in chains to Vienna, that old Dr. Mattuš had protested, but in vain, that Prince Thun had been arrested, that the Czech University had been suspended for some protest or other, — the people were not satisfied with reality and so they invented fables.

The arrest of Dr. Kramář, however, was the only certainty which I took back with me to Vienna.

Now, the nature of man is such that he does not fathom the ways and methods of Fate, he does not know that one of its apparent oversights may in time produce the most desirable results, he ceases to believe in it and wants to correct its mistakes. So it was that immediately upon my return I proceeded to a certain highly placed personage to explain to him what I had explained in the train to Choc, and asked him to intervene. The highly-placed personage was able to do so, that much I knew.

I arrived. His Excellency was engaged, he was not there. His secretary received me. He shook hands, smiled, asked me how I was, — I plunged in medias res. Such and such a thing had happened. An error, a mistake, a blunder, a misfortune. The secretary at once assumed an appearance of very serious gloom, and his voice changed from that of an amiable friend and assumed a dry official tone. "There you are, as long as Thun was governor, he kept Kramář safe, and Kramář, supposing himself God's equal, thought that nothing could ever happen to him, that nobody would dare to interfere with him. But Thun went, the correspondence of Kramář was seized, and the result is that he is locked up in the military prison."

I pointed out the results that this action would have in Bohemia, — the secretary turned red and remarked: "The nation will calm down and come to reason. Those who led it, have led it astray.

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Politicians, authors, — yes, you are all guilty. Look here, I have a dog; when I come home, he is lying on the carpet sleeping happily in the sun. I begin to pity him; why, poor old fellow, you are so neglected, nobody troubles about you, — and he then begins to growl and to pity himself, as if he really were most badly off. The Czech nation is not badly off, — on the contrary, but you, authors, politicians and — “

“Wait a moment, doctor, just a brief comment upon this canine idyl of yours. The dog, — that tallies. But the room and the carpet do not tally, and as for the sun, we have never been in it at all. However, that's all, I will not go to his Excellency. Good-day.”

This canine idyl had thoroughly warmed me up. And it opened out extremely distant perspectives to me; I now saw clearly all that had happened, was happening and would happen . . .

The reports about Dr. Kramář grew more and more copious. It was said that he was being cross-examined by Dr. Preminger, — who was Dr. Preminger? A man from Czernowitz. The Imperial Counsellor Penžek assured everybody convincingly whom he met: “Dr. Kramář can think himself lucky to have fallen into the hands of a Jew from Bukowina whose heart is in the right place.” Good. There was even a rumour that the case would not be tried at all. Then it was asserted that there would be a trial, and that it would last several days. Lieut. Preminger was said to be on his way to Prague and was cross-examining somebody somewhere. Stuerghk was said to have been conferring in the matter. A deputation of Young Czech delegates had been received in audience by the General Staff. Everything, it was said, would turn out well.

Both Czech Ministers were retaining a firm hold upon their posts, a fact which also aroused a certain amount of confidence. Could they have remained, if there had been anything serious against

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Kramář? Certainly not, — for with the person of Dr. Kramář the whole nation would be affected. And if there were nothing? They would be still less able to remain. At any rate, that was how the people judged it, but the Ministers themselves found a different solution, — they remained. They did this, it was said, to avert still worse matters which were preparing, and some of which might prove fatal. And these too, they averted, so it was said. It will be the task of history to decide which would have been better and more honourable. Today we can assert with the determinists that what happened had to happen, and we can add that it is a good thing it happened as it did, otherwise things would not be as they are today.

That was a beautiful spring. Day by day the sky was a clear blue, the air was fresh, the birds sang, the armies of the Central Powers advanced victoriously further and further through Russian-Poland, fortress upon fortress fell, every report announced swarms of prisoners, captured cannon, machine-guns, motor-cars, provision stores, clothes, boots, — there was joy on all sides, for the newspaper strategists announced that the war would soon come to a victorious end and peace was upon the horizon; — only above the lands of the Bohemian crown hung a black cloud, and the atmosphere beneath it was sultry, we breathed heavily, very heavily.

III.

It was the morning of June 17th. I left my office, collected my letters and proceeded home. The landlady of the neighbouring house, Mrs. Helena Krásná, was leaning out of the window, she beckoned to me and called out: "There are officers in your house, they want to take you away to Prague", and, as a matter of fact, a motor-car

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was standing in front of the building. Also, some man or other was cautiously following me, not leaving me out of his sight; I had not noticed him previously.

Already? I thought to myself. And why can it be? I did not know, but the continual feeling of uncertainty such as was possessed at that time by every man whose language was Czech, had not left me since the arrest of Dr. Kramář. Perhaps it was some accusation, — at that time they were showering down like drops of rain in spring, — perhaps it was my mere existence, perhaps it was as Dr. Herben put it: some General or other is sitting down looking at a map, you pass by him and sneeze, the General turns round and you are immediately guilty of the crime of interfering with military operations, — well, it was possible that I had sneezed in this way, — who knows? We shall see.

I entered the house, the little fellow from the street behind me.

In the room there were three officers, a captain, two lieutenants and a little volunteer officer, obviously a Jew, with a foxy look. They clicked their heels and introduced themselves. "Lieutenant Dr. Preminger" said a man of medium size with scanty fair hair and pale blue eyes. So that is he.

"What do you want, gentlemen?"

"Could we see the letters that you have from Dr. Kramář? And could we have a general look around among your things? Here is the written order." And Preminger handed me a paper.

A stamp, a signature, a hectographed text, only the name and address written in. "Certainly."

The man from the street stood in the anteroom. "Nobody is allowed to leave the house", Dr. Preminger instructed him.

Out of a box I took a bundle of letters which Dr. Kramář had written to me from the Crimea sixteen or seventeen years ago,

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and I gave them to Preminger. "You will allow me, gentlemen, to have my lunch, I suppose?"

Preminger bowed. "In the meanwhile we will have a look at the books, everything is of interest to us, both written and printed matter." They sat down and removed books from the shelves; I had my lunch in the next room. I was calm and said to myself: whatever it may be, I must show no weakness. I ate slowly, from outside could be heard the measured snorting of the motor-car, in the next room my guests were engaged in conversation. "I tell you that the Roumanians will go against us, I was ten years in a Roumanian regiment and I know them", expounded the Captain.

"I don't believe it", declared Preminger and closed one of my books noisily.

I was finished and went in to them.

"I will take these letters with me", remarked Preminger and he thrust some letters of Kramář into his breast-pocket. "And now we will see whether anything else will suit us. First of all show us all your correspondence."

"War-time? Or all of it?"

"The whole lot."

I began with the dead. Winter —

"Who was he?"

"An author, and excellent man. Further: Čech —"

"Who was he?"

"A great poet. A field-marshal was ordered to his funeral. Vrchlický —"

"Ah, Vrhliky, — I have heard of him. Is he dead too?"

"Slavíček, a painter —"

"Is he dead too?"

"He shot himself" — Šimáček, Neruda, Sládek —

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"Dead? This is a regular graveyard. We want live ones", remarked Preminger.

"Here. Leger."

"Why Leger? Why not Ležé?"*

"His name is Leger and he lives at Kolín. A poet."

Preminger looked suspiciously at the letters.

"At Kolín? Not at Paris?"

"Ah, you mean Louis Leger? No, I have nothing from him."

He laid aside our Leger disappointedly. "And you have no letters at all from abroad?"

"Yes. Here is a letter from Denis."

"Oh, that's something", and he took the letter out of my hand.

"It's no good to you. The letter is already several years old. Denis thanks me in it for the dedication of my book *The Apostles*."

"We shall see", and Denis' letter joined those of Kramář. "Nothing else from abroad?"

"Nothing else."

"Now for home affairs."

I opened drawers, undid bundles, — hundreds and hundreds of letters tumbled out, congratulations, literary matters, bills, telegrams, personal communications, cuttings from papers, rough drafts of poems — all in Czech, and these piles were shared out among the three officers, of whom only the Captain understood Czech. They looked at the signatures and dates, and asked questions.

The volunteer officer with the foxy eyes was standing in the next room and waiting for his turn to come. In the ante-room the man from the street was keeping watch.

I lit a cigar and offered them some. The Captain declined with
* i. e. giving the name a French pronunciation.

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thanks, saying that he only smoked cigarettes. Without a word, Preminger lit his own cigar, the third officer, an otherwise taciturn gentleman, remarked sharply that he smoked only "his own cigars" and also lit up. The smoke floated out through the open window to where the blue sky was spread out above the peaceful earth, and white swelling clouds were borne across it from north to east. There was a rustle of papers: letter after letter was translated, and as I saw that the pile was diminishing, I added fresh supplies to it.

"Tell the agent to come in", said Dr. Preminger to the volunteer officer, "we shan't be finished in two days."

Mr. Kolbe understood Czech. They gave him this and that to read through and express his opinion. Mr. Kolbe read it through and expressed his opinion.

The taciturn person had found a sheet of paper and gave it to Mr. Kolbe to read through and translate. There is a proverb which I once noted down: "To cut up chopped straw and prove that it is oats should not be tried even on a donkey." — Mr. Kolbe translated, the taciturn person asked Preminger whether he should take it with him. Preminger waved him aside. "But that certainly has some bearing upon the Czech nation", insisted the taciturn person. "Eh, Unsinn", * said the Captain interfering.

Dr. Preminger suddenly thrust his pile away and stretched himself in his chair. "What a fearful lot of letters you have. A paper deluge."

"Tell me, why did you really arrest Dr. Kramář? That is more than an error, it is folly, if I may quote —"

"You think so?" said Preminger smiling.

"The most black-yellow politician in Austria", I went on eagerly, "for fifteen years he has had a thoroughly hellish time amongst us for that very reason."

* German: nonsense.

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"Well, you will see what his Austrianism amounts to. You were with him in the Crimea, — were you in touch there with Russian personalities?"

"With persons certainly, with personalities never."

"Of course, you were there seventeen years ago. You like the Russians?"

"Russian literature above all, the Russian peasant extremely, Tsarism less."

"You see we know all about you", declared Preminger triumphantly. "And the English?"

"Sir, if I were an Englishman, I should not have the pleasure of your visit in my house."

Preminger laughed.

"Look, that's the one", and the taciturn person pointed out to him some signature in a letter. Preminger nodded.

"Ležé again?" said I pointedly.

"What is the Volná Myšlenka?" asked Preminger instead of replying. "A society?"

"No, an association."

"Well, that is a society."

"An association. A society and an association are two different things."

"You were honorary President of this society, weren't you?"

"Yes, I was honorary President of this association."

"Which wages war against all religions?"

"Which waged war against clericalism. Waged it, — for immediately at the beginning of the war its activities both as regards issuing periodicals and publishing books were stopped."

"Have you any papers, documents from which it would be possible to learn what were the real aims of the association?"

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"I will lend you a few volumes of the paper it issued, but you will return them to me."

"Certainly, and with thanks."

I found two volumes for him.

"Mr. Kolbe, look, here is a poem Franz II; tell me what it's about", remarked the taciturn person turning to the agent.

It was a poem which had once been published in the paper called "Neruda".

"There is nothing in it. Very nice patriotic verses. About how the soldiers fight for the Emperor?" remarked Mr. Kolbe.

The taciturn person scratched his head; "Why should Mr. M. write patriotic verses? and about Franz II?"

"Lieutenant", I said shaking my finger at him, "I must point out that by your last question —"

The taciturn person reddened angrily.

"The Lord knows that my back is already aching", said the Captain coming to his assistance.

It had grown dark. The chauffeur came up to say that there was no lamp on the car and that they must go. I pulled out a number of new bundles.

"That's enough, gentlemen", announced Dr. Preminger, "we will go. What do you want to take?" he said turning to the taciturn person.

"This", he pointed to it, "and this and this." There were about eight bundles.

"There will be no room in the car, there are four of us" explained Preminger.

"Are you taking me with you?" I asked, — I had completely forgotten the volunteer officer in the next room.

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"Oh, no, no, no", said Preminger deprecatingly. "But where are we to put this litter?"

"I will lend you a trunk if you will let me have it back", I offered.

"There is one more room?" asked the Captain pointing to the closed door.

"Yes, my wife and daughter are there", and I made as if to open.

"No, we won't go there, we have nothing to do with your ladies", announced Preminger.

"Ready?" asked the Captain.

"Yes. Just a report that we have completed the search, and we must tie the bundles together a little. Hi, officer."

I lent them a trunk. The volunteer officer tied up the bundles. Suddenly he said to Preminger: "Lieutenant, this knight has the red and white colours on his shield."

On the wall hung Schwaiger's picture "The Long, the Broad and the Sharp-Sighted". The knight who is riding across the foot-bridge has actually got a red and white shield. The volunteer officer fastened his little foxy eyes upon it.

"Lieutenant", he pointed out afresh, "has it any special significance that the colours there are red and white?"

"Keep quiet, and see about getting ready", snarled the Captain.

The foxy little eyes were lowered with injured reluctance and the little volunteer officer went on packing and tying up.

The report was read in a minute. I made it as easy for them as possible. I did not want the letters to be counted, I brought the trunk, the twine, the packing paper, — when a man has had such guests for five whole hours in his house, he has a slight desire for solitude and peace at the end of it.

"I draw your attention to the fact", I remarked to Preminger,

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"that the search has been very incomplete ; here are several thousand books, and there might be a treasonable document in every one of them."

"You haven't got the Tsar's manifesto?"

"No."

"We are ready. Tomorrow you will kindly appear at Hernalser Gürtel, No. 126, room 89, for cross-examination. A few trifles. At 9 o'clock please."

"I shall certainly come."

They gave me their hands, clicked their heels, Mr. Kolbe and the little volunteer officer carried out the bundles and the trunk, the car began to make a fuss, they took their seats, saluted once more from their seats and drove off.

The next day at 9 o'clock in room 89 on the Hernalser Gürtel. An uninviting, bare room, only three writing tables, a few chairs, cupboards, on the wall a map of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, on one of the tables a Remington. The Captain of the day before was sitting there and typing something. I was asked to sit down. Preminger would arrive immediately.

He arrived. Yesterday he had been jovial and talkative, today he was somehow stern and restrained. He took a file from a drawer, turned over a few leaves, took out a paper, handed it to me to translate. And he followed my impromptu version with a translation which he held in his hands, I went on reading, suddenly I stopped short. Sixteen years ago, on October 19th 1899, on the day when the language regulations were suspended, I had written a furious letter to Dr. Kramář in the Crimea. Bilge-water, fire, sulphur, petroleum, dynamite, — whatever could be said in words I had written, and flung everything at his head, of which I — — "but must I read that?" I asked Preminger.

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"Continue," he ordered sternly.

I translated the letter to the end.

"What do you say now, eh?"

"This letter is the very thing which proves what I explained to you yesterday about Dr. Kramář. I knew how I was offending his patriotic feelings, and that is why I wrote it to him. You can believe that Dr. Kramář —."

"Let's leave Dr. Kramář aside now; as you see, you are concerned here. This letter was found among Dr. Kramář's things, you wrote it to him —."

"But I just want to explain why I wrote it to him and why such expressions —"

"Do not suppose", continued Preminger, "that military justice is some blind animal, that it scratches where and when it likes, — if it had not been for this letter, your house would not have been searched yesterday."

"I should like to point out that the letter was written sixteen years ago, that I wrote it in rage and bitterness at the blow which our nation had received when the language ordinances were suspended, that I regret everything that is in it, — but that all of it is long since out of date, both according to the letter of the law and in my own spirit."

"So much I also know, and I draw no conclusions from it, — let us proceed to our report", and he prepared a sheet of paper and picked up a pen.

We soon finished the report. My relations with Dr. Kramář, our separation, our political friendship for fifteen years, something about the Volná Myšlenka, about my friendship with Masaryk, about that unfortunate letter — a signature and that was all.

"We have finished", declared Preminger.

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"Just one more word about Dr. Kramář. Tell me what there is against him. What is he guilty of? Why was he arrested?"

"You will see. I repeat that military justice proceeds in the most cautious manner. Peace will come, parliament will meet, its actions will be discussed, will be investigated, — for today I cannot tell you any more."

"And I repeat that Dr. Kramář is innocent. And that if there is a trial, not he but the whole nation will be in the dock, and that if he is condemned, the idea of Austria as current in the Kingdom of Bohemia will be justified for ever and ever. Even today, you see —"

"Yes, the Czech regiments, they are surrendering —"

"This matter has not been cleared up."

"The war loans."

"We give what we can. Blood and property."

"And at the same time you are thinking of independence."

"If that is a crime, then have a high wall built around the whole of Bohemia and Moravia, make a single gate in it, put a soldier there with a fixed bayonet, and above it put the inscription: Royal and Imperial Jail."

"Your hearts are not in the monarchy."

"That is how the monarchy brought us up."

In this way we passed the whole of the morning. Preminger looked into my eyes, I into his. We pierced into each other's souls. A razor was the thought I had of him, well made, excellent material, admirably set. An obedient razor which shaves easily and well, but with which throats can be cut if it is used by a careless hand. It has a bluish steely glitter, it is a first-rate implement, you cannot get angry with it even when it wounds you. For with the same precision and neatness it would — under different circumstances

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— cut open the veins not only of Messrs. Gross, Wolf, Teufel and all the rest of the Germanic Austrians, but even of any of its masters, if there were an opportunity.

"Au revoir," he said to me as we parted.

"I'd rather not", I replied.

At the same time as the search was taking place in my house, a police agent was searching the table in my office. He took away a few letters, an artistically decorated seal, several envelopes filled with postage stamps which in the course of my official work I was in the habit of cutting out and saving for the children of my acquaintances, an old table calendar, unused picture postcards, — all "zur weiteren Amtsbehandlung" (for further official action).

IV.

Just as Columbus when his wandering voyage was approaching the goal which he foreboded, began to see things announcing the proximity of land, — birds above the water, trees floating in the water and a certain kind of sea-weed under the water, — so I too began to perceive signs that my unrestricted voyage through this world was drawing to a close, and that I should soon find myself in some harbour which was certainly unknown to me but of which I already had an inkling.

Mr. Smutný, the district Governor of Králové Hradec (Königgrätz), instructed the municipal authorities of suburban Prague that the street which had been named after me should be called differently, and this was done. They began to confiscate my books, and they confiscated them so thoroughly that of all my literary works only a small fragment remained. What there was of it in readers and primers for schools had to be left out, and from what was allow-

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ed to remain in consideration of the subject-matter, or as an example of such and such a poetical style — what it was I know not — my name had to be removed. I read several of these decrees issued "at the instructions of the Ministry of Education." Students were not allowed to recite my poems, to borrow my books for home reading, to select my work as a subject for critical analysis; teachers were strictly ordered to avoid referring to my name as much as possible, and if it were absolutely necessary to mention it, they were told not to omit adding "a poet detrimental" (oh, holy bureaucracy! literally "detrimental") "to the Austrian Empire and hence also to the Czech nation." (A similar ban was placed upon three other names besides my own — Tolstoy, Herben and de Amicis, only for them the ban was not so severe — their articles might remain, they might be spoken about, but the names had to be removed). And finally, the things I printed were to be subjected to the strictest control — how far this was to go may be best seen from the fragment of a conversation which I had during that period with a certain worthy official authority:

He: "All that you write has a double meaning. If your name is under the sentence, 'the sun is rising', the Czech nation rubs its hands and exults because, — but you know —"

I: "And when I write: 'The sun is setting' and put my name to it, then you will say: 'Aha, paragraph 65a, offending against the interests of public order', and you'll lock me up, won't you?"

He: "You see how well we understand each other."

In short, the sword of Damocles hung by a slender thread above my freedom. On no day was I certain whether in the evening I should be able to lie down in my bed, no night, whether I should finish sleeping in my bed. If I came home and saw a motor-car standing in front of the house, my heart gave a thump, and I said to myself:

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already. But this state of uncertainty by no means interfered with the straight course of my existence. I slept excellently. I ate, drank, smoked with appetite, and I followed the spectacle of events with interest as they were reported to me in the morning and evening by the papers. And every day I saw the sun rise and the sun set, and took a sincere pleasure in both.

One day, — it was in July about six weeks after Mr. Preminger's visit to me, — I proceeded home and, lo and behold, Mr. David Kolbe stood waiting in front of the house.

"For me?"

"For you. Permit me to come up."

I permitted. And suddenly, without any ado there was another gentleman whom Mr. Kolbe introduced to me as his colleague. Good, good. Mr. Kolbe took out a paper, — a warrant for arrest? Oh no, only that they had to carry out a domiciliary search.

What? Again? Why, I had the pleasure only few weeks ago. —

"Orders" — Mr. Kolbe shrugged his shoulders.

They searched. Mr. Kolbe ascertained that nothing had been moved from the time when he had assisted the officers here. The books, the bundles, — he himself had placed them thus, he himself had tied them up with string, — those were his knots. —

I expressed my regret; nothing had been added, letters received since then I had burnt. Nor had anything been removed, I had now no reason to hide anything.

Mr. Kolbe saw things. Everything was in its place as before. The dust lying upon them was proof that nothing had been changed.

We lit our cigars. Outside it had grown dark and a thunderstorm had come on.

"Where did you learn Czech?" I asked Mr. Kolbe.

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"Why, I am from Bohemia. I did my military service at Hradec Králové."

"Hradec Králové, — a nice town. In the 18th regiment?"

"Yes, the 18th. My colleague understands Czech, too."

The colleague nodded and asked whether Mr. Kolbe would need him or whether he was to go home.

"You can go. There is nothing here." The colleague took his leave.

Mr. Kolbe told me about the domiciliary searches. In the case of authors it is an extremely simple matter; such gentlemen keep all their things together so as to have their eyes on them. But when it comes to professional thieves, to experienced robbers, — the floors had to be taken up, the furniture pulled to pieces, the chimney has to be inspected.

The thunderstorm was over. In the west a radiant topaz light was beginning to shine.

"Still, I must take something from this search to the chief commissary", and Mr. Kolbe looked around him.

"Give him this letter from Switzerland. It has passed the censor, — some unknown Russian asks me to intervene on behalf of his friend who is badly off in an internment camp. And here are a few picture postcards."

"Good, thank you. And you will come with me, won't you?"

"Pepi", I called into the kitchen, "give me quickly my box with the washing, a toothbrush —"

"But what for, what for?" expostulated Mr. Kolbe. "You will be coming back in a short while. It's only a brief cross-examination. Pepička, don't bring anything, but get supper ready for your master", he shouted into the kitchen.

"What on earth can be the matter now?"

THE JAIL

Mr. Kolbe smiled mysteriously. "Well, it's that article in the French paper. "L'indépendance", — I don't know how it's pronounced —"

"An article? I? Impossible."

"But your name is there."

"Has the chief commissary got it?"

"Yes that's what this search is for and why you have been summoned there."

• • • • •

The chief commissary asked me about my name.

"What is this J. S.?"

"You see, it's a little souvenir of the Roman Catholic Church. It gave me two baptismal names, and I when left it, I returned the names to it and kept only these two letters."

"Well, all right", he remarked. "Have you written anything recently for a paper in Geneva?"

"No."

"Anything for the Hus number?"

"No."

"What about this?" And he laid before me a copy of a newspaper of about the same size as Sládek's old "Lumír"; above as the title "L'indépendance Tchéque", beneath this a bad reproduction of Brožík's well-known picture of Hus before the Council of Constance, beneath the picture about ten lines of letter-press and beneath the letter-press, — my full name. It occurred to me that perhaps it was a quotation from something, — I read it through, — no, not a word was mine, — horrible journalistic bombast.

"Sir" I said, "I can only tell you what you will hear from every criminal at the first moment when he is caught: I didn't do it, —

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only I shall not be able to tell you anything else even later on. If I had written and signed that, I would not deny it."

"But there isn't a single compromising word in it. Nothing about the State, the dynasty, the army,— in fact no reference to Austria at all; why should not you, as a Czech, have written a few lines about your great compatriot on such an occasion as the 500th anniversary of his death?" he observed in a friendly tone.

"Nothing compromising, it's true, but it is nonsense, nonsense both in the wording and the contents. And if I had written it, there would certainly be something compromising in it."

"Wait", he interrupted me, "I myself had doubts about your authorship, — I have read various things from your pen, and this certainly bears no resemblance to you. But perhaps you authorised somebody?"

"Ah, you really want to know whether I'm in touch with my fellow-countrymen in Switzerland?"

"And you are not?"

"No."

"Then how do you explain your signature?"

"The carelessness of somebody who signed my name and did not think of the consequences. The curse of popularity possessed by an author's name."

"In America they print heaps of your poems, — and those are poems which are rather more compromising."

"They obviously select them from my former books which are now prohibited in Austria."

"Without your permission?"

"Nobody has asked me."

"Are you in written communication with America?"

"I was. Before the war. Not now."

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"And you declare that you did not write these few lines about Hus?"

"I did not write them."

"We will draw up a report. But I have already told you my impression, — that is not your prose. By the way, have you written about Hus anywhere else?"

"I was asked to, but I refused. I am in favour of celebrating Hus at a more peaceful time."

"Which papers asked you for such a work?"

I mentioned them, he noted the titles. Then we drew up a report. To the effect that I emphatically denied the authorship of this trifle, that I was not in touch with Switzerland, that I was in favour of postponing the Hus celebration to peaceful times, that I was not in communication with America, — and all this I confirmed with my own signature.

We had finished. I was just in the doorway.

Did I know Dr. Herben, — he asked me just as I was going. Of course I did. And I turned back and sat down again. Dr. Herben, — a quiet, peaceful man. In the editorial office he busied himself with literary matters, wrote obituaries, moderate social controversies; recently, however he had been forced by weakness of sight to give up all further work entirely.

"That tallied", he said. And did I know Bezruč?

Of course I did, an excellent poet.

Political?

More social and personal lyrics. He has pleasant memories of his youth in Silesia.

And who is he supposed to be?

There are legends about it. Some say that he is a simple miner, others that he is an engineer in the foundries.

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But it is supposed to be certain that he is a postal official at Brno.

Yes, they say that too.

And what did I think of the arrest of Dr. Kramář?

I told him. That his imprisonment was a dreadful mistake. That it was felt by the whole nation. That there is no policy more brainless than the one which manufactures martyrs for a discontented nation. That now we were asked to forget century-old traditions. Traditions, — not our own — but Austrian, purely Austrian. That the lands of the Bohemian crown were the scene of the wars waged by Frederick the Great and of the year 1866. That by a more moderate policy in the Balkans, Austria might have become a rallying point for all the nations and states there, that the Austrian Emperor could then have boldly laid hands upon the old crown of the Eastern Roman Empire, — on Constantinople, — on the route to Asia Minor, to Bagdad —

It was getting on for 10 o'clock when I parted from the student of my lecture.

A warm summer night, a sky full of stars.

So not today. When? When? I had an infallible foreboding that this sword of Damocles must sooner or later descend.

V.

Days elapsed, weeks elapsed.

And in one of those weeks it happened that the post became silent as far as I was concerned. No papers arrived, letters did not come, nothing. Then again a day came and the precious post put

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in an appearance with a bundle of all the overdue papers and a heap of letters. The address-slips on the newspapers had been torn through, the envelopes of the letters had been cut open on one side and gummed down again. Aha, even an Empire can contrive to be inquisitive, and at such a serious time about the private affairs of a respectable rate-payer. Family letters, those dealing with literary affairs, from friends, picture postcards, bills, cards from the front, parcels of provisions,—all this was of interest to the State, all this it opened and examined.

Good, the signs are increasing, I thought to myself.

I have already mentioned the confiscations of my books. They began on St. Václav's day, when newspapers published a report that my volume of verses entitled "Drops" had been confiscated. This collection had appeared at the beginning of the year, and had been received by the critics, as far as I had seen their comments, either with benevolent praise or with a profound lack of comprehension,—as the majority of my books. I had long reflected and conjectured what the state officials could have found compromising in it, I reflected and conjectured in vain,—finally I said to myself: This is not the first instance, it will not be the last.

And it was not, as I have already said.

For December 5th I received a summons to attend the military divisional Court. I was to appear as a witness in the case of Dr. Kramář and associates, charged with infringing such and such paragraphs. In the morning at 9 o'clock at the Hernalser Gürtel: Signed Mottl, Colonel.

In the meanwhile a whole series of persons, well-known in our public life, changed their residences. They moved to the Hradchin, then to Vienna, and romantic rumours were woven about the reasons for their journeys. Nearly the whole editing staff of the suspen-

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ded "Čas" was already residing in Vienna, and with them Dr. Soukup as well.

He, however, was soon set at liberty, as nothing incriminating could be associated with him.

I have a keen recollection of December 5th. Such days as these engrave ineradicable traces upon the memory.

It was not an agreeable day. Dull, overcast, chilly and dismal. Before 9 o'clock, as I had been summoned, I entered the building of the Military Court. I had been there six months previously to see Dr. Preminger. A porter was there who saluted, — curious; to-day I took his salute as a matter of course, as an insignificant phenomenon, — in another six months it will emerge as something particularly remarkable to me, for I shall see that this building has yet other entrances which are without porters who salute.

In the witnesses' room there were already a few gentlemen. Others arrived, — some I knew, with others I became acquainted. We were all assembled on behalf of Dr. Kramář and associates. Chief director Dr. Mattuš, Dean Burian, Švehla, Prokůpek, Mayor Groš, Dr. Soukup, — we were all waiting.

A sergeant-major arrived, read out our names and conducted us into the hall. On a platform in a semi-circle were the judges, — uniform beside uniform, medals on their chests, crosses, — twenty or thirty persons, I do not know exactly, — several silver-braided collars, — and the whole thing a blurred picture of combed heads, mustaches, eyes, ears, noses, — and nothing by which the glance was forcibly arrested. We received our admonition as witnesses and returned to the room.

From the windows there was a view below of small courtyards and a large one. Above them arose several stories with barred

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windows,—the jail. Everything was faded and drab,—the courtyards, the colour of the walls, the dusty windows, the air in the courtyard and the sky above it all. Drab, the most aristocratic of colours, can sometimes be very repulsive.

Dr. Mattuš was the first of us to be called. A quarter of an hour, half an hour, a whole hour,—still he did not return.

"They do it thoroughly" observed Švehla who kept walking to and fro in the room.

Mayor Groš was talking to Prokůpek about food questions in Prague. Dean Burian was reviving memories with Dr. Soukup of an encounter in connection with some school,—the Dean was once Minister for Education in the Central Committee of the Kingdom of Bohemia. In the little courtyard three Russian officers were walking about,—an old man with the badges of a staff officer, the two others being young subalterns. Two men of the defence-corps were guarding them with fixed bayonets. The area of the yard was about two hundred square metres, but it seemed that this trifle was no hindrance to the Russians. They moved along slowly, stopped, gesticated,—perhaps their conversation had removed them to some distant district of their native land,—perhaps they were criticising the conditions in their jail,—perhaps they were telling each other anecdotes,—who knows?

Dr. Mattuš came in, and Mayor Groš was called. The aged leader of the Old Czechs testified that they "do it very thoroughly" indeed, they want to know everything, they inquire about everything from several quarters.

A door rattled below, a military jailer opened the entry to the large yard, and a crowd of people scrambled out. They looked up at us,—some greeted, obviously our fellow-countrymen. Men old

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and young, in clothing which varied from the workmen's dress to a lounge suit, healthy and sick, as shown by their gait and the colour of their faces, swarmed in fours like a large dark reptile along the ellipse of the yard.

"The thick-set man in the cap is Markov, — condemned to death" explained Dr. Soukup to me, "the old man beside him is Kurylewicz, also condemned to death, the one who is just greeting us is Giunio."

All were talking, a muffled buzzing penetrated to the room where we were.

"They walk for half an hour like that in the morning, half an hour in the afternoon", remarked Dr. Soukup. We all stood at the windows and looked out. "The jail was built for two hundred people, now there are more than seven hundred in it. They are let out for exercise by floors, and when they are relieved, it is the turn of those who are locked up in the tower."

"Kramář and Rašín are in the tower?" asked somebody.

"Yes, here on the left."

We looked out. In a semi-circle squeezed into the yard, arose a grey building with small barred windows. Angel's Castle, — I was reminded of Rome.

The prisoners were guarded by defence-corps men with bayonets. The half hour was up; there was a word of command, the door opened, the black reptile crawled into the dark entrance of the building and was lost within it. The yard was empty.

Mayor Groš returned.Flushed, in high spirits, he was obviously glad that his period of torture was over.

Dean Burian went to relate what he knew and what he had seen.

It began to be tiresome. Udržal who was present at the proceedings in the body of the court, looked in for a moment and gave us an account of his impressions.

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There was a buzzing in the ears, as always when a man listens to time as it elapses.

Dean Burian returned after a while. Finished? No. It's the interval. "The presiding judge is certainly on the side of Kramář; whenever I said anything favourable to Kramář, his eyes twinkled at me."

The interval was over, the Dean was again called into the court-room. We walked about the room, passing the time away.

It was after 3 o'clock when my turn came.

I entered the court-room, looked round for the defendant and greeted him. Dr. Rašín was indifferent, as if he had been a bored spectator of the trial. Dr. Kramář, — pangs of sorrow clutched at my heart, — was sunken, his face was an ashen colour, — it was years since I had seen him and now like this. Editor Červinka seemed to be in a whimsical mood, and Zamazal, by means of whom the military tribunal, with remarkable sagacity, had increased the group of traitors to a quartette, was as mournful as the overcast day outside.

Dr. Peutelschmidt, the leading counsel for the prosecution, had seemingly acquired military smartness to perfection, although his head with its almost white hair, recalled the poet Robert Hamerling. In civil life he was, I understood, a police magistrate, also very smart and stern, — here his manners, yes, they reminded me of the army ; that is how an old gaunt sergeant-major browbeats a poor raw recruit for bad marching and faulty movements. Or, if you like, another comparison. He watched the defendants in the dock like a hawk, which has somewhere come upon four captured doves, and woe betide them if they advance a single word to defend themselves. These men were condemned in advance, ruined in advance. Why these ceremonies, cross-examinations, and all this martyrdom ?

The members of the court were obviously tired, the presiding

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judge blinked his eyes and his face twitched involuntarily like that of a rabbit, — this is what Dean Burian took to be the circumstance in favour of Dr. Kramář! — Dr. Preminger in full-dress uniform was sitting on the left-hand, alert, lithe, ready to leap.

Name, — when born, — where, — relations with the defendant.

A witness at his wedding, — a personal friend.

"Then were you his political opponent for a number of years?"

"Yes, for fifteen years. Up to the present day."

"How so, up to the present day?" he went for me.

"I see Dr. Kramář in the dock, when I might assume that I should see him decorated with all Austrian orders. This politician —"

I did not finish.

Swords rattled, the whole of the court was astir, Dr. Peutelschmidt reddened and shouted: "I did not ask you about that."

"You did ask."

"It is not your business to decide about that" he said, looking daggers at me, "answer only what I ask you."

And he asked why we had fallen out. I explained the story of the attack on the Czech evangelicals, but it did not seem to interest him very much.

"Were you a friend of Masaryk?"

"Yes and a contributor to his papers Čas and Naše Doba."

He showed me the copy of "L'indépendance" with Brožík's picture of Hus, and remarked "So you didn't write that."

Immediately afterwards he drew from an extensive file, my file, a letter dated October 17th, 1899, and introduced it with these preliminary remarks: "We now come to an interesting document which has to be read, and I call upon the Court to decide whether the public is to be excluded during this reading."

I wanted to protest against the reading,—in vain.

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"Surely you wrote that?" asked the leading counsel sharply.

"Yes I did, but these matters are now out of date, the letter was written in exasperation at the suspended language ordinances."

"The letter will be read."

Swords rattled, the court rose and proceeded to deliberate.

They called for the public to leave the court.

Dr. Peutelschmidt read the letter. The presiding judge blinked his eyes, the other members of the court cast withering glances at me.

It was the letter which I wrote to Dr. Kramář in the Crimea after the suspension of the language ordinances. A letter in which there are about seventy cases of *lèse majesté*. A letter about Franz Joseph.

"How do you reconcile it with your finer feelings, Dr. Kramář, that you selected the writer of such a letter to be a witness at your wedding?" he said swooping down on the defendant.

Dr. Kramář explained. The witness, he said, is a hot-headed poet, a pugnacious character, who has no consideration for any authority in the world, not for the nation either as a whole or individually, not for Bishops, Cardinals, not for the Pope, not for Kings and Emperors; not even his closest friends are safe from his pen, he himself could tell how he had been irritated not only fifteen years ago, but even before he fell out with the witness; he quoted an epigram which aroused suppressed mirth,—but the leading counsel swooped down on him afresh: "And you preserved such a letter, Dr. Kramar?"

"It is the manuscript of a poet" replied the defendant simply.

There followed a few questions and answers about the "Volná Myšlenka" and the tendencies of this movement,—even now I do not know why and how it was that this "Volná Myšlenka" was mix-

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ed up in all my cross-examinations, and in the evidence I gave at this trial; perhaps for economic reasons so as to have certain supplies prepared for all eventualities.

Thereupon we took our leave of the court very coldly,—they did not even thank me for my evidence.

* * *

A few weeks ago, long after this affair and after the affair which I shall yet describe in this book, at a time when the Imperial Amnesty severed all my connections with the military courts, I went to Dr. Preminger to demand back the trunk which I had lent him when he searched my house in June 1915.

'Do you know that on December 7th, when you were giving evidence before the court and made a remark about the Austrian orders, all the officers were in favour of your immediate arrest?' Preminger informed me.

"I do not know. And who prevented it?"

"I did."

"You? Only so that you could lock me up afterwards?"

"I did not lock you up. As long as your case was in my hands, you remained at liberty. Altogether I take very careful counsel before arresting anyone. It was the same in the case of Dr. Kramář. A domiciliary search,—I am in favour of that immediately. But to arrest a man,—no, then I reflect for a long time. I repeat, that as long as you were in my hands, you were free. When it was taken over by somebody else—"

"Doctor, for heaven's sake don't let it get known in Bohemia that you have any opinion of me or I shall be badly off."

"How is that?"

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"Did you not say that Dr. Tobolka was a good politician?"

"Yes, I praised him. Und was ist denn mit dem dr. Tobolka?"*

"Ein toter Hund ist er. Haben Sie übrigens auch den Dr. Schmeral gelobt?"

"Dr. Schmeral ist ein hervorragender Politiker. Was ist mit ihm?"

"Ein toter Hund ist er."

I should add that Toter Hund (dead dog) is a Viennese expression, in which the word Toter (dead) has the full accent, and Hund (dog) is by the way. So the expression is neither a term of abuse nor of criticism.

VI.

The case of Dr. Kramář and associates had been held in abeyance for some time. It was said new evidence had been discovered in Belgrade after its capture. It was also said that Dr. Preminger had fallen ill. It was also said that the proceedings would be stopped altogether. In those days of official silence, every event became the subject of a whole series of different versions and explanations, because a man likes to have complete ideas about a thing, and if he cannot get the actual facts, he invents them and tells them to his fellow men so often, until he believes them himself.

The winter of that year was not severe, and ended exactly according to the calendar. During a few evenings in February there were heavy and vicious winds, but one day the sun leapt into the blue

* "And what about Dr. Tobolka ?

"He's a dead dog. By the way, did you praise Dr. Schmeral too ?"

"Dr. Schmeral is a prominent politician. What about him ?"

"He's a dead dog."

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sky with such warmth and radiance, that the people quivered with sheer delight and blinked their eyes at the unaccustomed lustre ; crows swayed slantingly in the air on their ragged wings as if they wished to expose now their backs, now their bellies to the warmth of the sun; from the roofs fell drops of melted snow and glistened, like brilliants ; in the streets brooklets trickled merrily, the mud glistened, fur coats, winter costumes and ladies' dark dresses disappeared; the streets became gay with light overcoats and cheerful colours of women's dresses ; the people rid themselves of the heavy and cautious gait they had acquired during the winter months, and strolled along displaying their contentment in dainty spring-time steps; and in the parks where audacious blackbirds scurried about on the freshened grass, there appeared a crowd of nursemaids with and without perambulators, and tiny babies who had been born in the course of the winter blinked with their expressionless little eyes at the golden, radiant air.

And at the same time in the north, south, east and west, cannons, rifles, bayonets and bombs were at work; war was being carried on upon the earth, under the earth, upon the sea, under the sea, in the air,—war was being carried on by gods and men, machines, vapours, gases, electricity and all the acquisitions of science and art (for war was also being carried on by poets, novelists, savants, philosophers, draughtsmen, painters, pamphleteers, journalists) as if mankind had come to an agreement that it was necessary to slay all those spectres which are called culture, civilization, progress, humanity, morals and religion. Homage had been done to them for centuries,—now they must fall. A few crowns were shaking upon hallowed heads, a few wearers of royal garments were homeless wandering about Europe, the penny-a-liners who had formerly greeted them on their various visits, now pelted them

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with coarse jokes,— a new Iliad in which the simple heroes were silent and fell, and only types like Thersites made speeches at the back.

Everybody was tired of the war,—rulers, nations, diplomats, soldiers, but the war went on.

And the spring came with its fresh greenery, skylarks, chafers, blossoms, the first swallows appeared, flitted above the streets and darted into the air with artistic curves, but what else happened and what kind of a spring it was, I do not know. For the sword of Damocles now descended upon the head of my freedom.

A few years ago,—heavens, how pluperfect everything is today, — I wrote a little skit in three chapters, entitled "Clericalism Dead." For reasons given below, it is impossible to explain its contents — I can only hint at them. A certain caste of people, Archbishops, Bishops, Prelates, Abbots, Deans and Vicars assemble and say to themselves: we are unmarried, we have an abundance of the possessions of this world, — good, we will do something for our country and nation. And they did so ; they took over the National Schools, founded a second University, gave their country-houses to disabled artists and writers, — well, it was a skit. And because it was a skit, nobody here had noticed it, but in Zagreb a certain progressive paper took it quite seriously, translated it, printed it and exclaimed: Look here, just see what kind of clergy, what kind of bishops the Czechs have, — and suddenly the satire had its comic side. But that only by the way. So that hoax was called "Clericalism Dead" and the late "Volná Myšlenka" issued it as a pamphlet. It was a green, thin little book. Somewhere about the middle of April 1915 our beloved censorship also had a look at this booklet and confiscated it, which did not surprise me in the least, — not that I was convinced of the pernicious character of

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its contents, but because I had experiences, both my own and other people's, in these matters.

Then on April 25th the clerical paper Reichspost published an item of local news about the completed confiscation of this booklet, and very bitterly expressed its astonishment that I was still allowed to write, and to write things which had to be confiscated, — surely it was well known that I was undergoing a cross-examination.

To this item of local news our papers bashfully replied that the worthy Reichspost had been wrongly informed, that the pamphlet "Clericalism Dead" had appeared several years previously, but what is the good of speaking to them when they are Germans and do not understand you?

Some days later this paper again expressed its astonishment. Masaryk, the traitor, it said, was outside the country, but here was a man walking about at liberty in Vienna — yes, and writing too, as if there were no control, — a man who aimed at proceeding from the destruction of altars to the destruction of thrones, and so on.

I watched everything like the spectator of a bad play in the theatre, — with my mind elsewhere, with the fatalism of a Turk. I did not move a finger, I did not speak or write a single word, I gave no explanation, I did not defend myself. The performance was wearisome, there was no chance of getting away, so I waited for the end.

And I met with it on May 7th.

At home everything had been prepared. In an envelope the telegrams to my family and friends which Josefinka was to send off in case of my non-arrival, in my soul there was calm, in my table-drawer the manuscripts of new books arranged for the publisher, — to be prepared is everything. And I was.

So early one day I went to my office.

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It was a beautiful golden day, the streets swarmed with people, everybody was hurrying in pursuit of some aim — office machines; for years and years we have known their faces, their gait, their movements ; if one of them disappears, nobody misses him, the others will press on in same way tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, a year hence, five years hence.

I sat down at my desk and began to work.

At ten o'clock I was called on the telephone by Dr. Sieghart, the managing secretary. I was to take my hat and coat.

Now "it" is here, flashed through my mind.

I went up. The secretary's face was very solemn, and softly and slowly he began to say that "*leider muss ich Ihnen.*"*

"Arrested?" I said jerkily.

"Yes. A detective is waiting in the next room."

"Good, let us go."

I was told that I had about an hour if I wanted to write home.

Unnecessary. I had already seen to that. But I should like to write a few lines to Josefinka asking her to bring me a handbag with clean linen.

They said I could. Here was paper, a pen, an envelope.

I wrote. Clean linen, soap, a toothbrush, — and where was I to have it sent me ?

Perhaps to the police, they thought. However, we would ask the detective.

The detective came in. It was neither Mr. Kolbe nor the other taciturn person, — it was quite a strange detective. Yes, to the police, he thought.

"Have you a warrant for the arrest ?" I asked.

*"I'm sorry to have to tell you."

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'He had. Signed by the military commander, and I was arrested under paragraph 65a.

"Doctor, have you a manual of law here? Please find out for me what that is."

The Doctor turned over the leaves, 65a, — offending against the interests of public order, — the penalty from two years upwards.

"You must obtain a counsel, perhaps Dr. Pressburger" remarked the secretary, "he is rather expensive."

"A counsel? What for? Not a bit of it."

"But allow me to —"

"My dear doctor, you do not understand my situation. A poet cannot be concerned about a trial, a poet has nothing to hush up, a poet must be his own counsel."

"Well, think the matter over, a military court is no joke."

"We shall see. And now, my guardian angel," I said turning to the detective, "let us go."

And we went to the police headquarters. I looked at the May sunshine, which covered the streets, the houses, the trees trembling in the air, and thought and thought. What have they against me...? Two years... Military court... Family... Friends, but come what may, the portion of national honour which I now possess must not be sullied.

At the police headquarters various formalities had to be seen to. Documents or something of that kind. I had to wait.

They assigned me a small room where a fat man was sitting at a table writing with a very squeaky pen. From time to time he took a deep breath, pondered and went on writing. Another human machine, it occurred to me.

After a while the constable came in. If I wanted any lunch, he

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would bring me something. Perhaps I should like to look at the menu —

I looked.

He brought in the lunch and I invited the fat man to join the feast. He did not refuse.

And again his pen squeaked and time went on. Hour after hour. — What have they against me? — Two years, — military court, — army prison, family, — the honour of myself and the nation — how this fellow puffs. —

I stood up and walked through the room. Now and then somebody peeped in, — perhaps to make sure that I was still there.

The fat clerk put on his coat and took his leave of me. The machine had completed its day's work and would be a man again.

I was alone. For how long, I do not know. I had ceased even to think.

Then a constable came to take me to the chief commissary.

Ah, I know him — Mr. Kolbe took me to him on the previous occasion.

The formalities, it seemed, were settled. The detective could now hand me over.

I mentioned my clean linen.

That, I was told, was a matter for the military superintendent in charge.

Good. We will go.

Outside, the detective suggested whether I wanted to take the tram.

No, let's go on foot.

We went and I bade farewell to the sunshine, freedom, to everything. I looked at the houses, the people, the sky, watched for the final sight of some familiar face, and wondered who it might be.

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I met nobody. The streets were full of bustle, trams rattled, carriages, motor-cars drove to and fro, — my freedom, my life, farewell.

We reached the well-known building. But we entered by a different door. Instead of a porter, a sergeant-major stood there. The detective showed him the paper. He let us in. Sentries with bayonets, grey walls, everything grey and drab.

In the chief Superintendent's office, the detective handed me over. A grumpy sergeant-major took the papers from him, drew up an acknowledgment of receipt, then the superintendent called upon me to empty my pocket-book, watch, pencil, — the money was counted out and the amount noted in the report. I signed.

An old sergeant with a bundle of keys in his belt led me away. He opened the barred door guarded by defence-corps men with bayonets, he led me through grey and gloomy passages and finally stopped at door number 60.

He opened. "Mr. Dušek, a new gentleman."

Editor Dušek stood in the doorway and held out both his hands towards me. "I have been expecting your for some time."

"Thank you."

VII.

My first impression of the interior of this apartment was, of a dirty third class waiting room of some provincial railway station. It was full of people; they were sitting, standing, walking about, smoking, some were impatient, some were bored, some eyed the floor resignedly, — the train was late but nobody knew how many hours, days, weeks, months, and time, accursed time, never lags so sluggishly as when a man is waiting,

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Through three high barred windows the light of the afternoon sun was visible. It did not enter, its radiance rested upon the walls and windows of the building opposite, of that building where in the December of the previous year I had spent a day as a witness in the trial of Dr. Kramář and associates. What is reflected from yonder, falls in here, and there is not much of it; here prevails the sober twilight of an overcast day. And it is cold here as in a cellar on summer days. In the whole room there are only two military beds, two tables, a few benches, on the walls a few barrack racks were fastened, each rack was crammed with bags, boxes, bundles, clothing, tin dishes, glasses and pieces of bread; from the hooks were suspended capes and towels; high up on the ceiling an electric lamp jutted forth, beneath the windows were piled up sacks of straw, three heaps with six or seven sacks on each — that was the whole equipment of my new dwelling-place. An official notice on the door announced that this was "*Strenger Arrest für 9 Mann*" (Close arrest for 9 men), now there were about twenty of us here. Of course, in peace time this room was ample for nine criminals, but now there was a war on, it was a time for economy and self-denial, we had to squeeze in together as best we could.

Prepared and fully armed I entered this place, but if it had not been for my friend Dušek, I do not know how I should have managed. Fate had already provided me with various ups and downs in life, but every time I fell from the third storey on the pavement, there always happened to be a straw mattress which somebody was carrying and which broke my fall. But that in room number 60 of the Viennese Military Jail I should fall right into the arms of Dušek, was one of the happiest chances which have occurred to me in the course of my misfortunes.

A man prepares and equips himself with good resolutions, with

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a heroic spirit, with a most firm will; he says to himself: Prison, — good; loss of liberty, — never mind; a jailer, — there must be one: a warder, — there must be one also, — but the reality comes and the prison turns out to be a military jail, a cold and dismal room; loss of liberty turns out to be a complete loss of your own personality; the jailer turns out to be a prison governor, and the warder a Beschliesser; the reality is cruel, coarse, uncouth, and a series of trifles of which you have never thought, here play a very important part.

We sat down together on the straw mattress of one of the beds, — it was Dušek's bed which the superintendent, a decent German, had put there for him, and we talked together. Dušek was as thoroughly versed in all the details of jail life, as if he had grown up there. He knew the life history and circumstances of all the jailers and prisoners, the whole building had not a single secret or mystery for him, he was acquainted with all the conditions of life there and he initiated me into them. Like the chorus of a song, the question was repeated: what are you really here for? That I was there did not surprise him, — he had expected me with absolute certainty from that day in December when I gave evidence in the Kramář trial — but what could be the immediate cause? If it had been something political, they would not have locked me up with him, "accomplices" are not allowed to be together; therefore it can be nothing which is connected with the "Čas", or the Pastor (as we called Professor Masaryk); besides, I had not been concerned with politics, could not be in touch with abroad — well, it is certain that they have something and that they will tell what it is very soon, for every prisoner must be allowed to make a statement within 24 hours — "but it does not matter why they have locked you up", he observed, "you may be prepared to remain here for the duration of the war, and it is a good thing that we are together."

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He told me about our fellow residents. There were Viennese, Italians, Serbs, Russians, soldiers and civilians, Aryans, Jews, orthodox believers. The room was a kind of clearing-station; four or five were a nucleus as it were, the rest arrived, remained for a few days and then moved out on to the first or second floor. He himself formed part of the nucleus, he had remained, so that he knew best who the fresh arrivals were. I should need clean linen, soap, a toothbrush and a spoon. The food was not fit to eat, I should have to buy substitutes for it from the provision dealer, for which money, a good deal of money, was necessary. The money had to be sent to the office, the prisoner was not allowed to have a single heller on him — in the office everything was reckoned out, and when the things were purchased, the superintendent of our floor handed them over. Everything that was not allowed there was done nevertheless; they read newspapers, played cards, each man had a pocket-knife, a pencil, paper; smoking was allowed only on Saturday afternoon and the whole day Sunday, but as I could see, smoking went on day after day, and from morning till evening, even at night as well. The money which was in the room was called "black", — from time to time the warder came, found it, and you parted with it for ever, but so far very little of it had been found. The same applied to knives, pencils, cigars, paper. The currency among the prisoners and the form of gratuity for all kinds of services consisted of cigars — in return for cigars it was possible to obtain newspapers, rum, brandy, everything. Letters which arrived were censored by the examining superintendent, and in the same way, the letters were read which the natives of these parts sent away. Writing was allowed only on Sunday mornings under the supervision of the warder, the jailer or some authority set up by them. Visitors could be received only with the permission of the examining superintendent, who was present on

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such occasions, and as he was a German, the language spoken must be German. And such a superintendent often proceeded to Bohemia, either to hold a cross-examination, or to carry out a domiciliary search, or else to fetch back more malefactors, it was desirable that the visitors should apply in writing to know the day and hour when he could come.

A warder opened the door. It was Sergeant Sponner, of whom Dušek told me that he barked but did not bite; he called out my name. It was for my cross-examination.

I went.

VIII

A defence-corps man in front of me, a defence-corps man behind me, both equipped with old Werndl rifles, we walked solemnly along the middle of the street. We went from the Blindengasse, the street of the sightless, where the military tribunal held its sittings, to the Tigergasse, the street of Tigers, the headquarters of the military legal authorities. The genius loci is fond of making such unintentional jests.

The sun was still shining. But it was not the sun from which I had parted in the morning, it was a strange sun which somebody has put in the sky in the place of the beloved sun we know so well, and strange are its light and its warmth. Even these familiar streets have a stranger appearance, and the people passing through them are not Viennese, but natives of heaven knows what town. And finally, I myself, am I myself? And is this not all a repulsive dream? Two young ladies stood on the pavement and looked at us inquisitively.

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"Ein Spion",^{*} observed one.

"Oder ein Hochverräter"^{**} replied the other. For a moment their eyes blazed with patriotic indignation, then they burst out laughing.

The defence-corps men marched along in military style, one two, one two, each pace 75 centimetres, 110 paces to the minute. I walked with little civilian steps, and this must have confused my guard at the back, for he kept on changing step and stamped to correct my pace.

The street of tigers is a quiet little street in the 8th circuit. For the greater part it consists of old, low-roofed little houses above which rises here and there a high and more modern tenement building. People were hurrying to and fro on the pavements, they looked at us, and from the open windows we were met by inquisitive glances of conjecture; I also looked at them; but really I saw, I felt nothing whatever. It was as if my soul had fallen asleep. I was indifferent to everything that had been, that was, and that would be, I had no interest in anything, least of all for my own fate. I was not even inquisitive now to know what they had against me. The day had brought too many impressions, it was not possible to take them in, and my senses were blunted. Only the fragment of some Viennese tune sounded obstinately in my ears, and I could not get rid of it. In front of a high tenement building,—on it was a tablet with an eagle and the number eleven, the man in front of me, he of the defence-corps, stopped. He read the inscription, compared the number of the house with what was written on his official paper, made a sign to us that this was the place, and entered.

The first story, the second, the third,—on the door a tablet marked Oberleutnant Auditor Dr. Frank,—this was it. The de-

*A spy

**Guilty of high treason.

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fence-corps man went in to announce my arrival, the second kept guard over me meanwhile in the little ante-room.

The fragment of that wretched tune kept ringing in my ears.

The defence-corps man came back and beckoned to me to go in. A small room with two windows, by the left window a writing table with the clerk belonging to it; further, two tables at one of which was an officer of no great height, giving somehow an impression of cleanliness; he was clean-shaven, his hair carefully brushed, he had cold blue eyes, — Dr. Felix Frank, in civil life on the staff of the Viennese magistracy, now lieutenant-superintendent and searcher-out of guilty Czech hearts and souls.

Let me say at once that it was certainly a relief to us all that the military persecution did not employ our own people, Czech people as its instruments. I am absolutely incapable of imagining them in this capacity, — as an author I have a feeling for unity of style, and this would certainly have been impaired to a considerable extent. Dr. Frank had taken over Czech affairs and Czech people from Dr. Preminger of Bukovina.

He asked me to sit down, and his voice was agreeable and clear with a metallic note in it.

From a drawer he took out a file — my file — and I noticed that his hands also were clean and well cared for.

And he asked me whether I wished to appeal against my imprisonment.

Of course I did.

He drew my attention to the fact that this was a formality, that my appeal would change nothing, but might protract the course of my proceedings by several weeks. And he advised me not to appeal.

Good, I will not appeal then, but the jail was not to my liking, and of this I informed him.

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He smiled, disclosing two rows of clean teeth stopped with gold, and dictated the report to the youth at the writing table. That I did not enter an appeal. The machine clattered, the yellowish official paper kept emerging from its teeth, covered with symmetrical rows of writing.

Then from a drawer he drew out a book. Heavens, my own book, my verses entitled "Drops".

Did I guess why I had been arrested ?

No.

For four poems from this book.

I saw marked with blue pencil :

"In memory of November 5th 1908."

"Hospital Humanitarianism."

"To Dr. Frant. Mesany."

"Twenty Years."

My listless weariness fell from me at a blow. What, really for this? And in all my literary activity you found nothing else besides these four trifles? Tell me, is it possible?

Yes, for these four poems.

Joy, inexpressible joy, set me astir. I will fight for my liberty. How could this be a menace to Austrian power and order? I was prepared for all kinds of things, but that I should be imprisoned and cross-examined on account of such trifling verses, no, that I had not expected.

Like lightning there flashed through my mind the memory of Count Jáchym Ondřej Šlik. Slavata in his "Memoirs" quotes as if in mockery the letter written by him on March 2nd 1621 to Prince Liechtenstein. He said that he was not the instigator of that unfortunate deed which flung the Emperor's representatives from the window, that he had only heard of it about an hour and a half

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previously, that he could not even give them any warning, that he had opposed Mates von Thurn "almost to bodily violence", that Mathes von Thurn was a "false and notorious man", who had shamefully misled and deceived the gentleman of rank, that Šlik had not laid hands on the Emperor's representatives, — poor rebel, this explanation availed him nothing; on March 18th he was seized by the Kurfürst of Saxony, handed over to the Emperor's justices, and on June 21st he was executed in the square of the Old Town. All revolutions, whether active or passive, produce people such as Šlik; they undertake and carry them out in the conviction that their cause is just, but then when their cause comes to grief, they desert it, disguise it, deny it and conceal it, — as if defence of this kind had ever helped those who were defeated, and could ward off the vengeance of those who had conquered.

My case was clear and free from guile, — thank God. All these poems were written long before the war, printed several times, — I did not need to deny and conceal, I could not indeed have played so pitiable and aimless part as Count Jáchym Ondřej Šlik.

And so I dictated for the report: The first three poems appeared in Čas in the years 1905, 1908 and 1913, without arousing any objections; the last one appeared in Samostatnost in 1913.. In book form they were issued,—again without arousing any objections,—in my collected feuilletons, then "bei Umgruppierung meiner Werke"** (to use the modern term), I included them in a volume of short and topical lyric poems entitled "Drops", which I might call my diary.

"And by printing them during the war you have committed a new criminal offence" remarked Dr. Frank.

"Only that they were confiscated as far back as September 27th

* On re-arranging the order of my works.

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1915, and the poetaster has only just been arrested, that is, seven months later" I objected.

"That makes no difference. Nothing gets out of date here. Do you make any changes in your printed verses when you prepare them for volume form?"

"Very often. Rhyme, phrases, whole stanzas."

"What are your criteria in making such changes?"

"Artistic ones."

"You have not changed anything ad hoc in the poems concerned, in order, for example to bring out their chief features more prominently?"

"No."

"Has your publisher any influence on the contents of the book? Does he read it before he sends it to press?"

"No, he does not. He sends it to press just as he receives it from me. I alone take responsibility for everything."

He dictated the continuation of the report. The machine clattered, the paper rustled.

—Tomorrow I may be out of it—was the thought that occurred to me. For everything was so clear and obvious. An error, a judicial error. If they are human, I shall be among my books tomorrow.

"Did you extract only these four poems from the books of feuilletons referred to, or others as well?" continued Dr. Frank, and studied his pink finger-nails.

"Quite a number. In fact all the verse writings which they contain."

"Could you mark them for me in the contents?"

I marked them and noticed that they formed a good third of "Drops."

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"Here is your letter which you wrote when you were arrested. What is there in it? And who is Josefina Procházková?"

"She is my servant, and I asked her to send me my clean linen to the jail."

"Good, I will have it forwarded. Your case is a very simple one, a matter of a few days; we will investigate your statements on Friday or Saturday,—today is Tuesday,—I will have you sent for and we shall proceed to hear the case on its merits. You will then obtain counsel to defend you."

"I shall not have counsel!"

"Why not?"

"There is nothing to defend. The matter is clear. I wrote and printed such and such a thing, here it is, I alone can explain it,—if there is anything punishable in it, punish me."

"But you must have counsel."

"No. You take a man and lock him up,—I did not ask you to do so,—and then you say: have a counsel. I have nothing to hush up, and I permit nobody to twist and turn my verses. What I have written, I have written."

"As you like. I will now read to you the report of today's cross-examination."

"There is no need, I have heard it."

"I will read it through. You will sign."

He read it. I signed.

Then he wrote on a piece of paper how long the cross-examination had lasted, and handed it and me to the defence-corps men.

And again we went through the strange streets. A defence-corps man in front, a defence-corps man behind, one two, one two, I with short civilian steps between them.

It is impossible for them to keep me here longer than the end of

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the week. Such a paltry matter. After all, we are in the twentieth century. Within a week I shall certainly be among my books—such were my thoughts, and I felt like a cockchafer which is preparing to fly; it raises the covering of its wings, stretches the delicate membranes of its netlike wings, and moves them as if testing them; and its whole body moves as if it were taking breath for a magnificent flight.

Dušek, a sceptical person, damped my ardour: "Don't believe them; you will find that your case won't be heard on Friday, or Saturday either. They will keep you here on ice like me and all of us."

IX.

"Military justice, — that is a polypus with a multitude of arms and tentacles, and once it has seized anyone, he never escapes its clutches again. Even if you wriggled away from one tentacle, two others will grip you close, and three more will be brandished above your head. It has strength, but scarcely anything else. Together with Rašin and Kramář, the unfortunate Zamazal happened to slip into its grasp — good, it squeezed Zamazal with them. But here there can certainly be no question of a malicious joke,—anything but a joke" remarked Dušek.

We sat on the bed. Number 60 was pervaded by the mood of an ending day. Its occupants were smoking. A sergeant of the Uhlans was whistling a sentimental Viennese street song. On everything the melancholy of evening had settled. The highest windows of the building opposite were gleaming redly, the light of day was fading into dusk.

"We will have supper. Let me introduce you to our domestic

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arrangements. Here we have a small communist settlement, whose guest you are until you become a member. And you will become a member next Saturday as soon as you can contribute towards the supplies" explained Dušek.

I did not quite understand, but I assented. I entrusted myself entirely to my experienced friend, for even when I was at liberty, I had no very strong instinct for these various necessities of life.

Dušek made a sign to a man, the man came up, and looked at him questioningly. Dušek nodded, then he introduced us. The man's name was Declich. He gave me his hand without saying a word, went away again and searched for something under the other bed, by the window and in his box.

"An Istrian peasant, a Slav name, but he is an Italian. At the beginning of the war with Italy he was interned; then they searched his house, discovered pictures of Dante, Manzoni and Cavallotti, and our dear Papa Declich (we all call him papa,—he is our house-keeper) arrived here. Whether they have anything else against him, I do not know. Every man in this building has a corner in his soul which he allows nobody to see—all except the thieves, murderers, sharpers, robbers—they'll tell you everything, in fact more than everything, to make themselves interesting in your eyes."

In the meanwhile Papa Declich had put a bottle of wine on the table, a small dish of butter, and from an old newspaper he unwrapped some salami sausage, ham, cheese; salt he had in a match-box; then he searched for glasses, cut up the bread—the feast was ready.

"Budi, Hedrich, Voronin" called out Dušek to our fellow-diners.

A tall, good-looking infantry volunteer came up briskly and was already sitting at the table. Budi, a handsome fellow, a Dalmatian Serb,—"they have kept him here for weeks, and heaven knows what they want to pump out of him."

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"About secret societies, communications with the kingdom of Serbia,—about everything that a man knows nothing whatever about" said Budi smiling. He knew my name and had read some of my work in translations.

Hedrich was bashful. He was a little infantry-man ; he had thin legs, a small body, a large head, a cap thrust upon a thick shock of hair, and a cigar with a long holder in his mouth. He held it between his teeth in such a way that it stuck up in the air; and he had kindly blue eyes and honesty in his face.

Papa Declich also had blue eyes, but they were not so wide open ; they were shrewd, sharp eyes which could both speak and keep silence, laugh sincerely and hurl lightning, see everything and nothing, understand and fail to understand.

Voronin did not want to sit down. He was shy. The best thing was to let him have his way. Papa Declich gave him a share of everything, Voronin thanked him with his "Spasibo", sat down in a corner on a straw mattress and ate. He was a Russian, was supposed to have been a doctor somewhere near Moscow; in some way or other he had reached our lines, and was imprisoned on suspicion of espionage. What there was in him nobody knew. He did not speak about himself, did not answer a direct question, and performed the coarsest labour in number 60. When he had arrived, he was hungry, and possessed only what he had on him. A collection was made to provide him with a shirt; he was given a good pair of trousers. Voronin took what he was given, thanked them for it, but not even by these acts of kindness could they extract a trustful word from him. And his name was not Voronin, he had received this name from the office by mistake, he had kept it, answered to it and had not corrected it in any way. Somebody discovered that he had not the slightest notion of medicine.

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Budi was talking Italian with Declich — the Italian of Istria which sounded entirely strange to me. Hedrich was from Zwittau ; he had been a barber in Vienna and did not understand Czech. He gave me an account of his history. He had been an officer's servant and had reached Belgrade with his master. There his master had taken a few carpets as souvenirs, Hedrich a few spoons — not silver ones, just ordinary spoons. His master had been remanded, Hedrich was in jail. But he was satisfied there, and did not long for freedom. He did shaving and hair-cutting for the superintendents, the warders and the prisoners ; he was comfortable, wanted nothing — except that things should remain as they were.

Supper was over. Papa Declich cleared away and removed all the remains. Hedrich distributed cigars. They were his fees for shaving.

Again I had the impression of a waiting-room at a provincial railway station. People passed to and fro, smoked, talked, whistled, but still the train did not come.

"The days are long here, each one like an ocean. And dull, infinitely dull. On the other hand, you will see how short the weeks and months are" explained Dušek. Papa Declich remarked — this was his only German sentence — that the first two years here were the worst and then life became easier — well, there was something in that. "Yes, if a man gets used to it" continued Dušek. "I feel now as if I had never been free and as if I never shall be so again. I came here from jail at Prague — ah, it was different there ; visits, sufficient food, and I was at home. Here before I got into the way of everything... In those awful days this Istrian peasant became my friend. It was difficult to carry on a conversation, but we understood each other. In winter — the winter here is dreadful, darkness the whole day, frost, a regular frost — we sat wrapped up in

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blankets, and talked. He told his story, I told mine, and it was a comfort to each of us that somebody was listening to him,"

Suddenly light poured into the room. The electric lamp on the ceiling burst into a glow and illuminated the waiting-room. Voronin fetched something that had once been a broom and swept up. The straw mattresses were brought out and laid on the floor.

I came into conflict with Dušek, he offered me his bed. I lost, I could not help losing. Hedrich jumped up and made the bed. He turned the straw mattress, spread the blanket over, and put Dušek's cushion on the hard pillow.

"Will the lamp be kept burning?" I asked.

"Of course, so that our guard can keep watch on us. At 9 o'clock a bell will ring, and everybody has to go to bed. Of course, only those sleep who want to. We talk, smoke, play cards, — and then sleep in the day-time. Obstinacy is ingrained in the human character. The lamp reminds me. Recently two Englishmen were being taken through Vienna. They had captured them at Salonica and were taking them to Berlin. For the night they had them put here in the military jail. In the evening the lamp began to burn. The officers had undressed and they tried to put it out. It was no use. The elder Englishman, a staff officer, began to bang at the door. The guard asked what he wanted. Bring the superintendent here, ordered the Englishman. At last the warder arrived. This light must be put out, we are used to sleeping in the dark. The warder shrugged his shoulders and said that the lamp must burn. And he went away. The Englishman took a boot, flung it at the ceiling, the lamp was smashed and went out. After a while, an uproar, the warder, the superintendent, — but the Englishman yelled out that he had nothing more to say to them. In the morning the commandant of the jail arrived, the Englishman explained to him briefly and empha-

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tically that he had wanted the light put out, that the warder had refused, and so he had put it out himself."

The piercing sound of a bell echoed through the jail.

"9 o'clock. That is how they will wake us up tomorrow at five."

I got into bed. White shapes slipped under the blankets. Talking went on in a whisper. And smoking continued as well.

By my bed there was some sort of ventilation. An oblong opening on to the passage, covered with perforated sheet-iron. I turned in such a way that I could breathe the air that poured in.

And I began to arrange the day's impressions — it had been a very exciting day — and I weighed up my first impressions of the jail. Everything was quite different from what I had supposed.

X.

As far as the eye could see, a plain on all sides. Nowhere even a small hill, no end of the plain was in sight. And meadows, meadows, fresh, blossoming, fragrant meadows. Above them the blue sky, in the sky not a single cloud, and I stood upon a footpath and looked about me. I felt within me the happiness of this glowing June day and the delight of a man who is not reminded by any inner voice nor by circumstances without that he has any duties, that there is anything he "must" do. I need not hurry anywhere nor make preparations for anything, nor think about anything; there is no "you must" today, there will be none tomorrow. Freedom is the greatest happiness, and I was in full possession of it. I took a deep breath, opened my arms wide, and spread out my fingers like a fan—I wanted to enjoy this fragrant air, to embrace the golden light of day, to let this smiling happiness in at every pore. On the

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summit of high mountains a man can hear the voice of Eternity, in deep forests is the speech of mysterious sorrows, from the surface of the waters of the ocean the unending speaks to him, in a plain he feels the delight of freedom—

Somewhere near by, an express train raced along and with a shrill whistle emitted clouds of steam—

That is not an express train, somebody has been ringing for a long time at the door of my house—

No, I am in jail—that is yesterday's bell—get up, get up.

The light was burning no longer. From several sides came the loud cry : "A u f ! A u f !"

Several people gave loud and protracted yawns. Somebody was assuring his neighbour that he had not slept a wink. Somebody else was stretching himself so that his joints cracked audibly. A number lay quite quiet, as if it had been midnight.

"Gentlemen, get up, we will prepare for roll-call" ordered Dušek. He was commandant of No. 60 and responsible for the order there.

And he possessed authority, the last ones had now jumped up from the floor, Papa Declich with Hedrich ; Hedrich again wore a cap on his shock of hair—the straw mattresses on our side were lifted up and placed as I had seen them the day before. Voronin had fetched his broom and was sweeping up, on the other side straw mattresses had also been removed from the floor, the tables and forms were arranged, and in a few minutes number 60 had assumed its daily aspect.

"Line up, line up. They're already in the next room", exclaimed Dušek from the door.

The occupants of number 60 formed two ranks in military style. Unkempt, half-asleep, not fully dressed, with towels, soap and tum-

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blers containing tooth brushes in their hands,— thus did they wait. I stood between Declich and Budi.

"I could have slept another two hours" declared Budi sorrowfully. He was 22 years old.

"Attention" commanded Dušek. Keys rattled and turned in the lock, at the doorway stood the superintendent, a warder and an infantry-man in walking-out dress and elegant riding-breeches. He had fixed his moustache in order with a network arrangement—at the first glance it looked as if he had lathered his face for shaving and had been disturbed without being able to dry himself.

In the military manner Dušek reported the "number present", and that nobody was ill. The superintendent counted, the infantry-man made a note of it and announced to us new arrivals, that the medical inspection was at half past nine, and that at ten o'clock we should be taken before the prison commandant.

They went away, the door was left open and the whole of number 60 scrambled out.

"Come on, come on" Dušek urged me, "we will have a wash. Here is a towel and a piece of soap!"

We went along a passage past the open doors of several rooms. All were empty. At a turn in the passage there was a large rectangular recess with washing basins in it. In the wall were a few taps and under them broad lead pipes—man alive, turn on the tap, put your head under it and wash yourself.

Of course—not until there was a little more room. In the meantime there was a squeezing and pushing of a crowd of bodies stripped to the waist, water was splashing on all sides, men were bending over, puffing and brawling; those who had washed, were drying themselves in the passage or hurrying off to their rooms, and through this bustle a number of convicts pushed their way dragging the night

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buckets from the cells—these were the house orderlies. From the opposite direction others were marching, always in twos, with large kneading-boards upon which stood cups of a black liquid, black coffee, breakfast. There was shouting, cursing, quarrelling, the water poured from the taps and beat against the sheet iron, acquaintances were telling each other the latest news, warders were shouting at them to hurry up—a hellish din.

At last I got to a tap; icy water beat against my head, neck and back, Dušek beside me declared that this was the greatest enjoyment of life in jail.

We returned to number 60. Papa Declich had already put our breakfast on the table. He poured condensed milk into the black liquid, cut up the bread and invited us to sit down.

Heavens, if this had been coffee and if these tin dishes had not borne visible traces of food from a whole week and perhaps a month!

The warder poked his head in at the door: "Quick, quick, time for exercise."

I should like to observe in passing that in many respects we are very much behind the great cultured German nation. For example, in jail vocabulary. A man continues his narrative, and in every sentence he sees we are completely lacking in a jail vocabulary. "Warder". That is not the "Beschliesser", Mr. Gehringer, who in peace time was a barber at Ottakring, and now keeps watch over suspicious and dangerous individuals of Czech nationality. And what a completely different sound there was about his: "Schnell, schnell, Spaziergang" to my feeble translation. The German word "Zimmer" also has quite a different tinge to our word "room", how to translate the term "Hausmeister" (I shall refer to this worthy in due course), I really do not know, and there are several other things

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which can be expressed only with difficulty and imperfectly in our native language. It is clear that our forefathers did not go in for imprisoning to such a degree as to create a jail vocabulary, and when we were imprisoned, it had been created by a highly cultured nation, the Germans. We have jail traditions, it is true, and extensive ones, but we lack a terminology.

So we went out for exercise. It was in that tiny courtyard where I once saw the Russian officers walking. Perhaps two, perhaps three hundred square metres. The windows of the rooms pour out all their stench upon it, the feet slip in the coughed-up phlegm and spittle. Here close on two hundred were walking, of all ages, all nationalities, all religions, old men and jail-birds who had scarcely left school, Jews from Poland and Jews from Vienna, soldiers of all possible units, thieves, robbers, murderers and we, guilty of treason. Defence-corps men with fixed bayonets guarded us, as we walked in threes and fours, and high above our heads was the scanty blue of the morning sky and upon it flitted a number of black points, swallows who probably were also out for exercise.

"Dušek, is it possible; this dirt, this stench, this company, all this because of four poems?"

"What do you expect? Austria..."

Across a low wall dividing us from the other large courtyard, we looked at the tower.

"That window with the flowers is where Kramář is kept. Rašín is yonder" said Dušek pointing. We went on moving round a small ellipse. The blue haze from cigarettes and the gray haze from cigars mingled and rose like the smoke from the scene of a fire. People were talking, gesticulating, standing still, laughing, brawling. Only a few walked along like shadows with their heads bowed to the ground—perhaps they did not want to show their life's misery. I

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should also have walked like that, if I had not found Dušek there.

Mr. Sponner appeared in the doorway. He was our second warder, a former sergeant — with voice, appearance and features of a boor, a Viennese from Hernals.

"Fall in" (the German word was "einrücken", again with quite a different colouring.)

The key grated behind us.

We sat on the bed.

"We shall make the acquaintance of the others when we have seen a little of them. I will tell you their histories when you return from your inspection and parade", said Dušek.

Hedrich got me ready. He shaved me, dressed my hair and gave me a cigar, a good lad. And he explained to me once more the business with the spoons. He wanted to have a souvenir of Belgrade, he took them, they were not worth a couple of crowns. His mother's house was searched, nothing was found, but his mother herself gave them up of her own accord. Well, he was happy. Mr. Dušek was such a nice gentleman, and all were pleasant and friendly to him.

Papa Declich was busying himself with something by his bed. Budi had clambered up on the pile of straw mattresses and was asleep. Two were absorbed in a game ; they had cut out squares on the table and were playing wolves and sheep. They had cut up pegs, and shoved these discs as carefully as if thousands were at stake. Others were looking on. The time crawled as if it had gout in its legs.

Dušek and I were reviving memories of Prague, our friends, acquaintances and past events. We considered what might have been, and what probably would be. "It's no use, as long as the war lasts, they'll keep us here", sighed Dušek. At last there was the rattle of a key. Mr. Sponner was collecting us for the medical inspection.

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He led us through passages on the left in which were doors into other rooms, on the right were barred windows of ground-glass. These looked out on to the street, to freedom.

At last we reaced the doctor, Dr. Princz Arpad, assistant physician and medical superintendent of the jail. A well-nourished gentleman, a Jew. One of his Polish co-religionists, a member of our number 60, knew him from Karlsbad. They were deep in a very lengthy conversation. We others waited.

At last it was my turn.

"Are you ill?"

"No."

"What are you here for?"

"Verses."

"What? Verses againt Austria? I'd have sent you to the trenches. Why do you write such things?"

"Sir, am I before a doctor or a magistrate?" I snarled.

"Ah, you answer back, do you? Of course—a Czech. Get away."

The medical inspection was over.

Mr. Sponner looked at me in astonishment.

We again went through passages, mounted staircases and stopped in a passage in front of the office.

From a room, the door of which bore a tablet inscribed : "Rechnungsunteroffizier I. Klasse Alfred Papritz", a sergeant-major majestically strode forth. His cloak unbuttoned, in the manner favoured by Generals, an officer's long sword, an upturned moustache, a capital I in his glance, — he stood before us and looked at us for a moment witheringly. Somebody in the rear rank whispered. The sergeant-major flashed lightning in that direction and thunderingly bellowed for silence.

"What have you been doing?" he asked me.

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"I've been writing verses."

"Oh", and passed on to the next man.

At the third man he began to bellow. This one had been having a little scuffle in the room. The sergeant-major brandished his fist in front of his face, and threatened to chop him up.

After that he worked himself up into a temper a few times more.

When he had examined everybody, he made us line up, and ordered: "Don't move your left feet, — ruht (stand at ease)." Heavens, just like in the army, just like it used to be in the army.

The commandant of the jail, Lieutenant Colonel Werner, arrived.

"Habt Acht!" (attention.)

"What is your name, and why have you been arrested?"

I told him.

"Hm, hm," — he said nothing else.

And with this hm, hm, he received all the members of today's batch. Only the sergeant-major flew into rage a few times more on his behalf.

We were ready.

And with this, all the formalities connected with our reception were finished, and I was now a regular member of the jail.

XI.

The commandant of the jail was the Lieutenant-Colonel, Mr. Werner, his adjutant was a major, the chief staff superintendent was the third in rank among the mighty men of this under-world. Each floor then had a visible head in its own special superintendent, but the sole decisive authority, the lord of all these lords, was the one who in rank followed them all — Alfred Papritz —

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N. C. O. in charge of accounts. Alfred Papritz, whose acquaintance I had made at the morning's parade. He decided about everything, he intervened everywhere, and there was no strength that could defy him. The prisoners were powerless, and woe unto him who might venture to defy Papritz. Even the superintendents trembled before him, the chief staff superintendent carefully kept out of his way, for Papritz alone had the ear of the higher authorities, and his will was always their will.

Complaints, signed and unsigned information against him had been sent to the Minister for the Interior, to the Minister for Defence, to the Minister for War, but the result was the same, all these Ministers departed, fresh ones came and were relieved by others, but Papritz remained. And after every complaint he gave the prisoners a taste of his power; it was permitted — and the ghastly official food made it necessary — for prisoners under remand to eke out the food with what they bought, and they had their lunch fetched for them from a restaurant, once or twice a week also a caterer, under the supervision and through the co-operation of the superintendent's office, supplied them with supper, — the vindictive Papritz suddenly ordered that the prisoners were to be allowed neither one nor the other. It was further permitted on special holidays to bring the prisoners parcels of food, — these parcels were strictly searched, during which process the better parts of their contents often "got lost." Papritz forbade that also. There was no appeal, and every protest was in vain.

From the restaurant and from the caterer Papritz received his fixed amount of baksheesh — and, so it was said, a respectable backsheesh, — how great must have been the promptings of vindictiveness within him, when he succeeded in renouncing this gratuity, or else how great must this baksheesh have been before-

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hand, that now he no longer needed to take it into account and could give full vent to his fury. It is true that after some time he became merciful again, but there were considerable doubts that this was due to humane considerations towards the prisoners.

When Hindenburg became an Austrian Field-Marshal, the Viennese attributed to him an anecdotal desire to become an Austrian Sergeant-Major as well, — if only those worthy narrators had known their Sergeant-Major Papritz as well as the members of other Austrian nationalities knew him in a military prison!

The judicial supervisors emphatically refused to interfere — the internal affairs of the jail were not their concern. They arrested a man, cross-examined him, finally brought him up for trial — whether in the meantime he lived under reasonably humane conditions, and in fact how he lived, had nothing whatever to do with them.

"Tell me, Dušek, who was that infantry-man this morning in the elegant riding-boots?"

"That was Mr. Fiedler. A man who has seen a good deal of the world and of life. A Viennese, a German, who speaks all the Slavonic languages fluently, speaks a great deal and yet says nothing. At least, not about himself. He is a convict — he has another five or six years of his sentence to serve, and nobody here has found out what it is for. Ask him, he will tell you. But ask him tomorrow, he will tell you something quite different. He has been in Asia, in America, his experiences are enormous, he is an expert at a whole series of trades and at all kinds of clerical work, but what kind of a man lurks behind all this it would be difficult to say. He wraps himself up in his speeches as in a mist. He is the superintendent's right hand, so that while the superintendent sits and smokes pipe after pipe, Fiedler does the work. Returns, reports, bills, orders — he prepares them all. And at the same time he is a kind of minor Papritz

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for our floor. Only he is not such a bully. He himself is fond of life and he is willing to let others live also. He drinks good wines, smokes good cigars, obtains everything for which he has a fancy, the caterer is altogether considerate, both as a man and as a trader, and besides that, do you know that we have here quite a quantity of real millionaires? In our number 60 for example we have two — the little stout man with the large head, he is standing there by the window, Mr. Fels, and next to him the tall one, Mr. Goldenstein — Jews from Galicia, proprietors of petroleum wells; in the adjoining rooms there are also a number of them; we call them "censorists"; you see, rich men of that kind have become accustomed to regarding money as a key which opens everything in the world, and unfortunately for the world, they have never been disappointed in this belief. Well, you will see that they will try it in jail as well, and they will discover that even in jail this key will open everything. When they want newspapers, Mr. Fiedler will supply newspapers; pencils and paper are, of course, prohibited, but Mr. Fiedler will supply them. Mr. Fiedler will provide everything. And while he does it he will smile, make jokes, run to and fro, in the morning he will give his moustache a smart twist, —"

"And he is a convict?"

"That is the only thing we know for certain about him."

Keys grated in the lock, the prisoners crowded to the door, the door opened, two orderlies threw on the floor a dirty kneading-board with twenty dishes of soup and twenty dishes with the second course,—lunch. The prisoners made a rush for the kneading-board, seized on the cleanest dishes and carried them off as plunder to the tables, the straw mattresses, the boxes placed along the walls.

Papa Declich was one of the first — he must certainly be a man with a long record and many experiences here — the dishes stood

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on the table, the portions for Dušek, Hedrich, Budi, myself. Papa Declich cut up the bread. The soup contained barley, pieces of flour as big as a child's fist, unchopped vegetables and a few scraps of meat. And a horrible lot of pepper.

I tasted it, — it burnt my tongue. I could not manage it.

"Tell me, why is there so much pepper?" I asked Hedrich.

"Because the head cook is a Russian prisoner, some sort of Asiatic; he is fond of it like that, and then a man has to keep on drinking and never quenches his thirst" declared our barber with good-humoured indignation.

"So a Russian prisoner is head cook here?" I asked Dušek.

"Yes, an imprisoned Russian. Or a Russian prisoner, it comes to the same thing," laughed Dušek; "what do you expect? Austria. To everything that human understanding cannot grasp, this word Austria forms a key and an explanation."

They were cursing in the room. "Food for cattle", "hog-wash", "this ought to be reported on parade", "send a specimen to the War Ministry", "Feed Papritz with it, the beast" — and the plates were flung with the greater part of their contents of soup back on to the kneading-board.

"That's not fit to eat", remarked Dušek resignedly, and he pushed his dish aside. "We must wait till the evening, and then we will eat our fill. I have discovered that it is quite enough for a man to eat once a day."

Budi and Hedrich also pushed their plates aside. Papa Declich drew them up to him, fished out the scraps of meat, cut them up, salted them and ate them with bread. He liked it,— an Istrian stomach.

"What is the second course?" I asked, looking at the thick yellowish semi-liquid in the second dish.

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"Those are beans," explained Budi, "and these beans were here on Monday in their original form, but as we sent them back because we couldn't swallow them, on Tuesday they were mixed with fish, but as the fish smelt so bad that we could swallow it still less, we sent it back again; to-day the fish has been taken out of them, they have been boiled, mixed with vinegar, and now we are expected to call them gruel. But it's no use, we can't get them down even in this disguise", and Budi's dish flew in a curve on to the kneading-board so that the gruel was splashed all about.

There was fresh cursing and abuse. The dishes fell and clattered as they knocked against each other on the board.

"Those are our lunches — now we will have a piece of bread and butter, and make up for it in the evening. Papa, butiro."

Papa Declich unpacked his papers.

The orderlies rushed into the room and cursed at the abundance of mess on the kneading-board.

"Now it will go floating down the sink," explained Hedrich. "How many poor people in Hernal and Ottakring could have been fed with these beans if they had been given to them before the Russian Asiatic spoilt them," and he put his hand into his breast pocket and pulled out a cigar: "Mr. Dušek."

We smoked.

"You mentioned the censorists, what are they?"

"A nice business. Only yesterday, just as you came, about 80 Jews joined us. From the censorship, into which they got by a trick. They bribed the commandant of the military censorship of letters, a Captain Moscheni — by the way, he is locked up here too — with four, five or six thousand, and they censored letters, and in certain cases gave information where they found anything compromising. Soldier's letters, sent by field-post, passed through their

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hands, postcards and letters written to soldiers from home likewise ; who knows how much domestic trouble these people caused by their work. And now they are here. The whole business came out in a typically Austrian manner. A certain prostitute was murdered in Vienna. As usual, no trace of the murderer. Among her possessions the police discovered a number of letters from a regimental medical officer with his name and address. So they went to him and instituted a search. But even so they found nothing which would have led to the discovery of the murderer, but on the other hand they came upon the censorists' trick. The regimental medical officer was mixed up with it."

The room was quiet with the quietness following a meal in the afternoon. A few were still chewing slices of bread, others were stretched out on the straw mattresses, were smoking and staring with a sullen glance into vacuity.

Papa Declich had also stretched himself out. Budi was snoring in the sound sleep of youth. Hedrich was lying down, cap on head and with a cigar which had slipped into the corner of his mouth.

"Dušek, let's have a nap."

"Let's have a nap."

XII

Tuesday, one — Wednesday — two, Thursday — three— what, only three days ? And I feel as if I had been here three weeks, no, three months and even longer. My freedom is already far, far behind me ; I recalled it and my heart began to ache, I began to think of the future, and gloomy thoughts arose in my mind. I have loved nothing so much in the world as this freedom of mine ; I could not

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even imagine that it would be possible to live without it—and lo, I am living here, I am living without sunshine, without air, in dirt, amid hunger, with thieves, sharpers, robbers and murderers, which human society has rejected from its midst; I watch how time as it elapses bears away the irrecoverable hours of my life, and whenever a bitter wave of grief arises in my spirit, I suppress it, refuse to recognize within me the slightest shadow of an emotion, and I assume a bearing as if I had been here for years and were to remain here my whole life. For: Danton, no weakness! Nobody in the other world has ever detected signs of it within me, nobody shall ever do so here among the filthy dregs of human society. Here a man practices mimicry, it is true, he adapts himself to his new surroundings, but he cannot drag forth his soul as the rest do, and expose it quivering to the gaze of beholders. No word of grief must pass the lips, the breast must heave no sigh, and not the least stirring of sorrow must be revealed in the glance. Everything must remain within the soul, and there let it crystallize; it already contains a whole array of such crystals of wrath and hatred, let there be more of them. There is no paper, and in any case it is impossible to write here, so let us hold our peace. I would, however, give the following advice to all estimable states (if such conditions prevail elsewhere as in this one): if you lock up poets, give them paper and pencils, and let them write. Verse, prose, it doesn't matter which. They will write down the contents of their souls, and although the critics may afterwards adopt a varying attitude towards it, you will be satisfied. Let them sing when you put them into a cage, for the things that have to crystallize within them are apt to be worse than dynamite.

Yesterday evening towards 9 o'clock before the lamp flared up, I heard the warbling of a skylark. A brief, exultant scale, as if it

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were the greeting of one acquaintance to another. Nobody heard it, I alone, and it pleased me. The bird, I suppose, had flown from distant fields, it had passed over the outskirts of the city, had settled upon the jail roof, and uttered a call, a greeting. It was as if it knew that down below, behind the bars, there was a poet sitting, a lover of freedom who was watching the last flashes of day in the windows opposite.

And in the following night I had another beautiful dream. I was somewhere with people dear to me. The sun was gleaming magnificently, and the world was fresh and magical. And I had a feeling of freedom, we were all free, and that was why the world was so delightful. The tall figure of an antique Goddess—Artemis, I said to myself—proceeded from a grove near by, stood at the edge, pulled aside the bough of a birch tree with which she veiled her eyes, gazed upon me and smiled —

In the morning Dušek went off to the office. The superintendent needed an additional man to help him, Mr. Fiedler was not enough, the agenda had increased enormously—there were more of us than had been arranged for: he had placed the management of the rooms in the hands of a sergeant of Uhlans. In civil life the sergeant had been a coffee-house keeper in some out-of-the-way street of the fifth circuit; during the war he retained his military rank in a hospital where he had some duties in connection with the commissariat; and there it was alleged that certain cigarettes had been ordered which the patients did not receive. It was supposed that the greater part of them had been smoked by the customers of the coffee-house in the fifth circuit—but this was not true—the sergeant beat his breast and vowed that his honour was everything to him, and he called as a witness Mr. Karl, an infantryman who was also accused (and of course also unjustly) of having had an

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unsteady hand in the barracks. And Mr. Karl (I draw attention to the fact that in jail strict heed is paid to the proper use of formalities in intercourse; "Mr." must not be omitted in addressing anyone; Mr. Fiedler, Mr. Karl, etc.) declared that if only those were to serve their time in jail who were actually mixed up in things, number 60 would have to contain quite different people from those who were there. Of course, they both gave a glance at our table, as if they were making a silent exception (I was sitting there with Budi and Papa Declich—Dušek was already performing office work); for Mr. Karl and the sergeant were patriots.

The sergeant was put in charge, — good. But after a while he came to ask me how he should manage at morning and evening roll-call if the superintendent did not come; he said that he as a sergeant could not say "all present, sir" to the warders Sponner and Gehring who were only platoon-leaders. I assured him very solemnly that in truth he could not. Whereupon he went to the censorists, explained the difficult situation to them, corroborated it by my opinion; the censorists listened to him, nodded their heads, remarked: jo, jo, but expressed no views whatever on their own initiative, for which reason the sergeant applied to Mr. Nicolodi. Nicolodi used to sit all day on his box leaning upon a stick. He was an old man of seventy, with tiny short legs which could scarcely carry him across the room. He was an Italian from Roveredo and had been here for several weeks. At the beginning of the war he had entered a refugees' camp, then there had been a domiciliary search where he lived in Roveredo, and in his shop (he was a tradesman who had retired from business, which was carried on by his daughter and son-in-law, but they had fled to Italy) had been found flags with the Italian colours. It was in vain he objected that he had not put them there, or that he knew nothing about them, that

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he had not been in the shop for years and years, and had neither the interest nor the opportunity to go there, they took him to Vienna and put him into jail. He did not know a word of German, he could scarcely see ; in the morning Papa Declich used to dress him, wrap him up in a plaid, put his stick in his hand and place him on the box. There the old man sat all day motionless and without speaking a word. Whether he thought, whether he did not think and, if he thought, what he thought, — heaven alone knew. And so when the sergeant explained matters to him, — and possibly when explaining them to him, he was only explaining this difficult affair to himself again, for it is the way of the Viennese to think and reflect aloud, — he only grunted, hm, hm, and coughed.

Hedrich came back from an errand. He had been shaving people in several rooms and wanted to rest. He put a cigar in his holder, lit it and sat down with us. The sergeant immediately unburdened himself to him of his dilemma. Hedrich looked around the room and remarked with deliberation: "If the superintendent comes, you can report to him, if a warder comes, let platoon-leader Kretzer report". The sergeant exulted. He clapped Hedrich on the shoulder, asked him for a cigarette, and went off to explain to the censorists how he would manage it.

Mr. Kretzer, the platoon-leader, had an insuperable aversion to the trenches. For six months he had remained hidden in Vienna to avoid them, but he had nevertheless been tracked down. He was the size of a mountain, an unusually strong fellow except for that fatal weakness which had brought him in our midst. He had an enormous appetite, and he would have felt thoroughly happy in number 60 if it had not been for this appetite. But the sergeant, following a noble impulse of his soul, gave him a slice of bread when he had expressed his consent to do the reporting.

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We received a new member. A reddish, freckled man in a light overcoat entered the room, looked around him and came up to us. A censorist. In eyes, features, voice — a Jew. He asked whether he could write and send off a post-card from here.

To whom?

To a lady. He had an appointment with her that day.

Impossible. Writing was allowed only on Sundays.

Then he would telegraph.

Impossible. Until he had undergone his cross-examination, he must not think of any connections with the outside world.

But perhaps the warden would — ?

We advised him not to.

He only wanted to tell her that he could not come for several days at present, and that he was in a sanatorium

"Sanatorium is an old-fashioned phrase, we speak of an Orphan Asylum", I explained to him solemnly.

He wanted to know why I was there.

"I circulated boxes of sardines, in the belief that they contained sardines, but it was discovered that they were bombs with nitro-glycerine. So they took them away from me and I am now under remand on a charge of endangering the safety of weak-minded persons in accordance with paragraph 7,580."

He introduced himself: "Editor Dr. Smrecsanyi."

Budi burst out laughing: "And what was your name before?"

The editor laughed too.

Well, he did not spoil the joke.

"Editor of what?"

"Of the Reichspost."

Of the Reichspost? Good heavens, Immortal Nemesis, — at least this much ...

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"You cannot write, nor telegraph either, and they won't let any of your messages through unless they contain the truth. The examining superintendent censors everything, the jail provides all your communications with an official stamp.

"But this is terrible", he said interrupting me, "what shall I tell her? She is waiting today, she'll wait tomorrow —"

"Where is she waiting?" asked Hedrich inquisitively.

"In St. Stephen's."

"Not in the temple?" suggested Budi maliciously.

"I am on the editorial staff of the Reichspost and therefore römisch-katholisch, the Reichspost would not take a Jew."

"Take off your overcoat and make yourself at home" Hedrich advised him.

"Hier nur erste zwei Jahr nicht angenehm" (Here only the first two years are not pleasant.) Papa Declich uttered this, his only German eternal truth.

XIII

Saturday.

Yesterday evening at 9 o'clock I again heard the call of the skylark. Mr. Kretzer also heard it, he attracted the attention of the rest, and the whole room listened. The skylark warbled its brief exultant song a few times and then was silent.

For a while there was an oppressive stillness in the room.

"I should like to have its liberty", began Mr. Fels.

"But not to sit with it on the top of the roof", remarked Mr. Goldenstein. "I would go to a music-hall today. But first of all I would have a good feed."

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"Ah yes, a portion of smoked meat, greens, dumplings", said the sergeant rapturously.

"No, first of all fish, a portion of soused fish, then roast meat with potatoes, braised onions on the roast meat, after that chicken with preserved fruit—at Meisl's and Schadn's they have splendid preserves—a glass of Pilsen beer with it, no, I'd have two at once put in front of me, and some pudding."

"Don't tantalize me! I'll kill you", Mr. Goldenstein threatened with comical desperation—but the comical part was put on, and the despair under it was genuine.

The man who was so enthusiastic about a copious supper was named Fröhlich, Abraham Fröhlich according to the jail records, but Adolf Fröhlich was the name above his shop and the one by which he was known in Viennese society. Also a censorist.

"Pooh—I don't long for freedom" declared Hedrich convincingly. "As long as Mr. Dušek and you (this was meant for me) are here, I like it."

"I'm quite satisfied here too", observed Mr. Kretzer, "if I were to leave to-day, I should be in the trenches within 24 hours, and that's not at all to my liking. If only there was enough to eat here."

"Yes, to eat", several hungry persons agreed. For at noon, in addition to an intolerably peppered water-soup, potatoes had made their appearance on the kneading-board. These potatoes had been thoroughly overboiled, and in the resulting pulp there were clots of baked flour, containing an intolerable addition of paprika. Nobody ate anything. Hedrich pronounced dreadful curses on the captive Russian, "an Asiatic who is head cook here, a fellow with slanty Chinese eyes, who takes good care to look after his own table." Everybody had eaten up his portion of bread (the soldiers received half a loaf, the civilians a fifth), the week's rations were consumed.

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Ah, Friday is here "the most horrible day", so Budi declared to me, but our Papa Declich unwrapped a piece of cheese and butter from his moist rags, opened a box of sardines and we ate. Quietly and without zest, fifteen pairs of eyes looked over to our table in greed and anger, and we ate quickly and in silence, as if we had stolen food somewhere.

"Well, tomorrow we'll eat too" said the sergeant to Mr. Karl soothingly.

"And we'll drink — I've ordered three bottles of wine."

Let me point out that a bottle of wine sounds promising and thoroughly magnificent, but these bottles of wine were also delivered Saturday after Saturday by the caterer, red and white wine, his own bottling, a mysterious taste (a dash of lemonade, a dash of vinegar, a dash of alcohol, an enormous amount of water), and after drinking it there was a wooden feeling in one's head.

We went to bed before the bell commanded us, and there were none of the usual conversations from mattress to mattress. Nor was there any smoking — there was nothing to smoke. Such a Friday had no other significance except that it brought us twenty-four hours nearer to freedom.

And again I dreamt about it. It seemed to me that I was floating in a boat across the sea. The wind filled my sails, whose ropes I had entwined around my hand, while with the other hand I was steering. The boat, with a slight list, was speeding over the crinkled surface, the furrowed waves beat against its sides, I longed to get further and further onwards—I did not know from whence and what was there—but onward, away.

I was awakened by a rattling at the door. All the heads raised themselves on the straw mattresses. Mr. Sponner was bringing in a new fellow-inmate. An elderly man in artillery uniform.

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Extensive cursing. Where was he to go? There was no room. Mr. Sponner declared that he couldn't help that, slammed the door and locked it. Everything was done with a maximum of noise, for a din is, as it were, the salt of military discipline in general and of jail discipline in particular.

"I can lie down here on the table", announced the artillery-man reassuringly. "I don't mind it, I'm used to everything." He threw his overcoat on the table and prepared for rest.

"And why are you here?" asked Dr. Smrecsanyi. (This "why are you here" was the customary formula of welcome).

"Why? A few pair of boots got lost from the store and the canteen woman reported us. There are three of us, one on the first floor, the other on the second. Cursed old hag." For a little longer he sat half undressed on the table, and demonstrated his innocence to us. Then, seeing that the heads were sinking down on the mattresses and the eyes were closing, he stopped talking, rolled over on the wood and curled up under his overcoat.

That was Friday.

And then the next day was the day upon which had centred all hopes, dreams and longings of my fellow-inmates ever since Wednesday. Wait, on Saturday. If it were only Saturday. I am looking forward to Saturday.

We came back from our exercise, and the promised day began to perform its pranks:

Voronin took the fragment of a broom and swept up. We looked on, — a man deprived of freedom and movement is interested by everything that happens, whatever it may be. Voronin produced whirls of dust, the dust rose upwards, formed a haze of many shapes and fell down again on to the floor, straw mattresses, the towel

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which had been hung up, on the overcoats and upon us, the grateful spectators.

Papa Declich and the artilleryman of yesterday dragged in a tub of icy water, rolled up their shirt-sleeves, sprinkled the water on the floor, whereupon Voronin chased it to and fro with his broom, until it had turned into a black puddle. The artilleryman thrust a brush into it which had long since lost its bristles, and Papa Declich dabbed a black rag in it. The puddle, chased about in this way, rolled from wall to wall, finally it turned to the threshold of the room, where however, Papa Declich jumped after it, collected it with his rag and wrung it out in the tub.

We looked on. The censorists were sitting at the other table and swinging their legs in the air. Budi was lying upon the piled-up mattresses, Mr. Karl beside him (he was whistling a tune from the "Merry Widow" the while, and he was whistling it artistically); the sergeant together with platoon-leader Kretzer, had climbed on to the second pile of mattresses and were also looking on, the sergeant relating about his captain who, if he only had an inkling where he (the sergeant) was and why he was there, would give himself no rest until he had liberated him. Old Nicolodi was sitting on his box and also looking on, Hedrich was roaming about somewhere in the jail and shaving people. Dušek was writing in the superintendent's office, the rest were standing by the walls and also looking on. How modest a man can become, how simple in his tastes, with what trifling spectacles he can manage to be satisfied here!

The sergeant suddenly told me to climb up to him and look out of the window. From the courtyard outside could be heard quick steps,—I looked: Dr. Kramář. With his head bent forward he was fairly racing around the circumference of the large square courtyard. Defence-corps men with bayonets were guarding him and

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were watching to see that he did not communicate with Dr. Rašín, who was walking at a leisurely pace as if he were not in jail at all; but I had to jump down, a defence-corps man had noticed me and made a threatening gesture.

Dr. Kramář... we have met... and here... what will come of it all? It is hard to imagine. My native land reminds me of a grayish, impenetrable mist. I did not know what was happening there, I did not know whether any faith or any hope was left there, or whether anybody was thinking of us and of what was coming. Still, the mist will fade away, the sun must appear, but shall we also see it rise? And if not... exoriare aliquis... there is no policy more suicidal than to manufacture martyrs for a discontented nation.

"Dr. Kramář is a very gifted man" remarked the sergeant.

"Assuredly."

"And that is how he races along day after day. You can't call it walking."

"Where is Dr. Kramář?" asked Smrecsanyi and climbed up on the straw mattresses.

"Get down. If they report you, I shall be mixed up in it", and the sergeant Zimmerkommandant gave him a push.

The sergeant was a Viennese and consequently an anti-Semite by birth—of course, he did not know that Dr. Smrecsanyi was römisck-katolisch and on the editorial staff of the pious Reichspost.

The air in the room was damp, the floor still moist. I jumped down and measured it off. It was 10 paces long, each pace 57 centimetres, that is, $7\frac{1}{2}$ metres altogether. Something can be done to kill time and take exercise.

"Fellow criminals, our blood will grow putrid with this eternal sitting and lolling about. Of course, in jail we have to sit, but we will revolt, we will walk. Always in threes. If we walk for an hour

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and a half every day from wall to wall, we shall cover six kilometres, then two kilometres during our half hour's morning exercise in the yard, in the afternoon another two—ten kilometres altogether, that is enough. Messrs. Fels and Goldenstein, you join me and we will begin. And the rest of you arrange among yourselves, it's a pity to lose a single minute."

I concluded this speech, the censorists, Fels and Goldenstein joined me, and away we went.

The others talked it over and agreed that it was right.

A rhythm bore us along, the two censorists were glad that the time passed and that it was good for their health. The others looked at us. Mr. Karl intoned the Radetzky march to the sergeant's accompaniment.

"How do you manage to keep so calm?" Mr. Fels asked me.

"It's my clear conscience."

"And if they condemn you?"

"They will condemn themselves. Even if I were going to the gallows, I would whistle the Marseillaise."

"You Czechs are a wonderful nation."

The room rumbled beneath our steps. Mr. Smrecsanyi wanted to join in. "Go away" Mr. Fels snubbed him, "you don't belong to our squad. The order is only in threes."

Just before noon Mr. Fiedler arrived and ordered everybody to go to the office. The smoking requisites were there. Twenty men dashed out of the room and down the corridor as if it were a matter of returning to the other world.

After a while they were back again and clouds of smoke quivered through the air and glided away through the bars of the windows. Payment and distribution took place. Voronin, the orderly, took and stored away cigars and cigarettes, thanking with his quiet:

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Spasibo. Hedrich returned, and from his pockets he produced his week's pay; cigars and cigarettes.

"Never mind hunger, as long as there's something to smoke", declared the sergeant.

The orderlies dashed in with the kneading-board. What was there? Vegetables. Invectives and curses.

The pieces of meat were fished up out of the soup, but nobody touched the vegetables. Hedrich explained about the Russian Asiatic and what a scoundrel he was.

That afternoon there was no exercise—we were to receive the provisions we had ordered. The caterer had just delivered them.

Again a gallop to the superintendent's office. The superintendent was sitting there in quiet meditation smoking a pipe. Dušek was writing, Mr. Fiedler was distributing butter, cheese, ham, salami, sardines, marmalade, wine, Krondorfer, glasses, spoons,—whatever had been ordered. We carried our "Ausspeise" back to the room in our caps and hats.

And now it was already time for the evening roll-call. The superintendent, the warder and Mr. Fiedler counted us, the door closed—the end of the day. It was 3 o'clock in the afternoon. If anybody were to be taken fatally ill now, it would be no use, he would have to wait until the next morning.

Jaws were busy and smoking went on as well.

And the room rumbled beneath the steps of the squad of "scorchers". That was the new phrase.

THE JAIL

XIV.

The evening shadows fell upon the windows of the building opposite and crept into the greyish mist of our number 60. Eating had stopped, and smoking had increased accordingly. And the room was pervaded by an affable, peaceable mood. The sergeant knelt down beside old Nicolodi and was explaining to him that this would be over one day, that we should be set at liberty, that Nicolodi would proceed to the warm south, and he, the sergeant, would return to his coffee-house. Mr. Fröhlich was telling Dr. Smrecsanyi about his son, a lad of ten, a marvellously gifted child, whereupon Mr. Smrecsanyi described to him the beauty and the intellectual attainments of that lady whom he ought to have met when he was in our midst. Mr. Fels and Mr. Goldenstein were deep in a conversation about some artful Galician sharper, and were mutually recalling his knavish tricks. Platoon-leader Kretzer was walking about with Mr. Karl, and they were whispering what must have been very interesting things, for they were deaf to everything that was taking place around them. At the other table the artillery-man was playing wolves and sheep with Hedrich who was so taken up by the game that he had even forgotten to smoke. A few spectators were following the contest; Voronin silently, while others were criticising and advising. This irritated the artillery-man so much that he began to curse and warned everyone in a very incisive manner. We were sitting with Dušek, Declich and Budi at our table, and were quietly discussing our fellow-inmates. Papa Declich termed the political prisoners "patriots", the remainder "Fallot", — we were patriots, Voronin was a patriot, the old man Nicolodi was a patriot, but otherwise the whole lot here were "Falloti", with the exception of Hedrich, who was neither a patriot nor a

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"Fallot", but a poveretto, a poor wretch: massimo "Fallot" was questo Tironi.

Tironi was a tiny little man, nearly as tiny as Nicolodi; he was bloated, disagreeably unclean, he laughed loudly until he started coughing, and he smelt of several smells, for which reason everybody whom he came near sought to get rid of his company as speedily as possible. He had been an apothecary at Scutari and was supposed to have got mixed up with both the Serbs and the Austrians. The Austrians had taken and locked him up. Whether he was an Albanian or an Italian was difficult to say. He spoke German well, he spoke Italian, Turkish, Serbian and Greek well, — a Fallot in all languages, in all nationalities according to Budi, a native of Cattaro, who knew him from previous years and vowed that he was a man capable of anything. Tironi was always in a rosy mood, for everyone whom he looked at he had a sweetish smile and a cringing joke,—a stunned conscience bestows upon its bearer just as joyous a calm as does a pure conscience.

And behold, speak of the devil,—and the massimo Fallot was slouching up to us and sat down beside Budi. Papa Declich addressed himself to me with a gesture of loathing, slipped off and went to his bed. Tironi with senile prurience was desribing to Budi a visit he had paid to some famous haunt of ill-repute at Constantinople . . .

"Dušek, Saturday is over."

He guessed what this sentence referred to: "Frank? didn't I tell you beforehand? How many such Saturdays have yet to pass?"

The sound of singing penetrated to us from without. One voice began and then a whole chorus chimed in.

"What is that?"

"The Polish Jews in number 64. Students for the rabbinate.

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There are about twenty-five of them. They wanted to sneak out of the army,—with Polish Jews nobody knows where he is. Not even a court-martial. They have had them here for several months now and can get nothing out of them. They have no documents, they say that everything was destroyed during the Russian invasion; all they have is an endorsement from the heads of their local authorities that they are actually students for the rabbinate, but several of these heads are locked up here with them to be on the safe side, for these endorsements are exceedingly suspicious. You see them at exercise; one was a shop-keeper, one was an official in a Savings Bank, one was a tenant of an estate, one was a barber, one was a private gentleman, — the war came and he described himself as a student for the rabbinate, that is, as one who was learning the sacred theology of the Jews and who had a claim to exemption from military service. Their authorities gave them papers confirming that they actually were studying, one with this rabbi, the other with that one, another again was studying at home; at last the whole affair became suspicious to the military and they took them. They eat according to their ritual. That is, a Jewish benevolent society here provides them with food prepared according to the ritual. Papritz, a great anti-Semite, has fits of rage from time to time and forbids it to them; the Jews starve, deputations proceed in the meanwhile to Papritz, until he graciously gives permission again, only to forbid them afresh after a few days. And on the Sabbath they sing their religious songs.“

I listened,—the singing was drawn out in a melancholy, lamenting, yearning manner, then they struck a few powerful notes, and the choir sang something which sounded immensely triumphant, exulting and mighty. It was from such songs that Goldmark is said to have derived tunes for his “Queen of Sheba”.

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But what was this all at once? From the other side came the sound of music, military music,—drums, trumpets, the drums were especially powerful—and on top of this shouts, as if the military music were playing in a circus, as if the showmen were giving orders to a lady equestrian, or had charge of jumping lions,—a hellish music, the drums and cymbals drowned everything else,—the singing of the Jews was overwhelmed amid it and perished; only from time to time did some higher note still emerge,—what could that be?

"The orderlies, Kranz" explained Hedrich who in a state of excitement had left the wolves and sheep and had sat down with us. "Kranz is doing the circus, the orderlies provide the music. He doesn't like the Jews and that's how he spoils their devotions."

"And who are these orderlies?"

"Convicts. Each of them has still several years to serve. Kranz has six now. Fiedler is also among them. They keep the jail clean. They are all in one room, they have to get up in the morning before anyone else, sweep up, carry out the buckets, fetch the breakfast, clean the passages, and they live in a state of huge prosperity. They have their profitable little deals, they attend to everything that is wanted, nobody discovers how they do it, they move about in the jail freely, they eat and drink to their heart's content, and on Saturdays this is how they amuse themselves."

The din of the music continued. A dry music, without trumpets and bassoons, only drums and cymbals. And the shouting, the uproar, the yells,—the whole jail must have heard it, and not only the jail, but the streets round about as well. Bang, bang, bang bang, bang, bang, trrrrrr, crash, crash, crash.

Today I shall not hear my skylark.

The lamp on the ceiling burst into flame.

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"Let's go to bed", said Budi welcoming it as a means of getting rid of Tironi.

The straw mattresses flew about and fell to the ground. Voronin scraped the floor with his broom. The tables were pushed away, everyone was contented, and it looked as if they would sleep peacefully.

Bang, bang, bang, bang, trrrr, crash, crash, crash.

"What do they do it with?"

"With everything that will make a noise. They whack the tables, the ground, beat one dish against another, play the drum with their knives on the woodwork, — there are twenty of them."

"And Fiedler?"

"He drinks, smokes and yells. But you will see what it will look like to-morrow."

Hedrich made my bed. He made it skilfully. He smoothed and spread everything out, he hung up my towel so that the light would not fall in my face, — a pleasant, sterling lad.

Bang, bang, crash, crash, crash.

I don't mind it, I can sleep in any noise, I can always sleep when I want to.

On the floor conversations were proceeding from mattress to mattress. The artillery-man was again lying on the table. And smoking went on the whole time.

Bang, bang, crash, crash, crash, trrrrrr.

Frank has not sent for me, has not cross-examined me, — this occurred to me. Still, — only calm, calm. We are here bearing a fragment of our country's honour, and therefore: No weakness. Poets mould the spirit of a nation. Poets and philosophers. Not politicians, not lawyers, not surgeons, not engineers. And therefore it is quite right of them to lock us up. The spirit of the nation is

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rebellious,—that is our work. In former times poets created gods for mankind — Homer, the poets of the Old Testament, poets of the New Testament. Now they create men. As long as they created gods, it was well with them,—seven cities disputed the honour of Homer's birth-place, nature submitted to them. Orpheus tamed wild animals. Arion was saved by the dolphin from drowning. Ibucus was avenged by the cranes. Death did not venture to lay hand on Aeschylus, and an eagle had to drop a tortoise on his skull in order that his earthly fate might be fulfilled. Yes, that is how it was once, and afterwards, later, poets were the great judges,—Dante, Shakespeare, they judged Emperors, Kings, Popes,—all mankind, but from the time when poets moulded the souls of their nations, the mighty of this world have locked them up. Gods,—yes, men,—no, and I can fall asleep peacefully,—he who is my man, is firm and strong,—yes, I can fall asleep, bang,—bang,—trrrr,—crash, crash, crash.—

XV.

On Sunday we were not awakened by the bell until half-past five, the only thing being that scarcely anyone had any benefit from this half-hour. As usual I opened my eyes before five,—behold: the artillery-man on the table was already smoking. Mr. Fels was conversing with Mr. Goldenstein, Mr. Fröhlich was gazing disconsolately at the ceiling, old Nicolodi was sitting and sighing, Dr. Smrecsanyi was pinching his foot,—perhaps only Budi and Hedrich, the young who never got enough sleep, and Papa Declich, a sturdy peasant nature, who was glad to indulge in an extra few minutes even if the bell had already sounded, were the only ones who were sleeping the sleep of the just.

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The lamps had already gone out, day was beginning to break. In the night,—it must have been about two o'clock,—they had come to fetch Voronin. A dreadful shindy, a slamming of doors, a warder and a defence-corps man with a bayonet, — Voronin had to dress immediately, get his things together and be removed into another jail. He got up, tied his things into a pocket-handkerchief, shook hands with us and went. We were sorry for him. What was in store for him? Where would this good, quiet man be flung?

Then we went to sleep again.

And I recalled a memory. A week previously I had been on an excursion. I had gone along the Danube through blossoming meadows to Lang Enzersdorf. It had been a magnificent sunny day,— I was a free man.—

"Do you know how long the orderlies kept up their row? Till after midnight, long after midnight" related Mr. Fels.

"I never closed an eye", added Mr. Fröhlich.

"In England everything is permitted that is not forbidden, in Germany everything is forbidden that is not permitted, here everything is permitted that is forbidden,—especially in jail", remarked Mr. Goldenstein sententiously.

The bell had not yet clanged, but we got up. Even in the most oppressive situation man likes to preserve the appearance of free will,—he gets up voluntarily even though he could stay in bed another few minutes. And then he listens to the ringing of the bell with superior disdain.

But now it had already begun to peal. It seemed as if it were more shrill and ruthless than usual.

"That's it, keep your row up", growled the artillery-man.

"Get up, get up", — those who were already awake aroused those who were still sleeping.

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At the roll-call Papa Declich drew my attention to Mr. Fiedler. In truth, a picture of misery. His eyes were bleared, the veins in his temples swollen, his head was heavy and his hands trembled.

"Fallot" remarked Papa Declich with scorn. For the Italian likes to drink, but never gets drunk.

In the wash-house there was a supply of news. The night transport had taken sixty people from our jail to the military prison at Rossau, to Moellersdorf and elsewhere. There they would be "on ice". The superintendents did not need them, they would not be called up for cross-examination, they would keep on waiting. In this place there was a lack of room. Old Gehringer, our warder, had gone with them and had not yet returned. His successor was named Schmied and was a Feuerwerker, a bombardier in the artillery.

At breakfast Hedrich brought me a dish of black coffee. He said it was from Kranz. From Kranz? Did he know me? Perhaps he was a fellow-countryman? No, a Viennese, but he had heard that I was an author, and he said he hoped that one day I would describe what I had seen and experienced here; moreover in the course of the morning he would come himself. Altogether the news had got about in the jail that I was there, and Warder Sponner was very much frightened that I should describe how he cursed and shouted. The superintendent also had recently inquired how I proposed to describe it. "The superintendent is a very decent fellow" added Hedrich in a whisper, "yesterday evening he had a row with Papritz in a public-house, and told him straight that he worried people for no reason, and called him a bloody brute. Papritz threatened that he wouldn't forget it."

The coffee was really coffee,—I shared it among our batch, and the patriots were glad.

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Fancy, Kranz. A feeling for music, a feeling for literature. "Hedrich, what have they against Kranz?"

"Oh, he has been in prison several times. He is about forty years old, and he has spent a good half of his years in jails. He is fond of burgling jewellers' shops, he has worn military uniform without authority, and so on. At the same time he is a thoroughly good fellow. And a man of character, — Papritz fears him like poison."

During exercise Dušek introduced me to a man in dragoon uniform with chains tied round his feet. To prevent the chain from dragging along the ground, he lifted it up with a rope, the end of which he held. He walked with legs astraddle, his face had an intelligent expression, there was a certain dignity in his pale blue eyes, — a very sympathetic personality. And his story, as Dušek related it to me, was a regular martyrdom. Engineer Kubaleck had been employed at the outbreak of war in Russia, at Reval; before that he had been in Germany, in Switzerland, in France. He had a Czech name, but he was a German. When war broke out he had hurried to Austria with his wife and two small children, he had been stopped on the frontier, and at Moravská Ostrava he had been led before Marshal Mattuschka, who snarled at him: "You are a Russian spy. And you know about Russian espionage in Austria." Now Kubaleck knew nothing, he answered a little brusquely, — and ever since he had remained in the clutches of military justice. His family had been interned at Chocen, he had finally been led away to Vienna. One day he had quarrelled with the superintendent, had broken his sword, and that was how he had come by the chain which he had worn ever since.

(I noticed that when Dušek was relating this story with many details, Papa Declich puckered his lips several times as if he wanted to say something, and at the same time his eyes twinkled with a

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light and sceptical smile of contempt,—but he controlled himself and said nothing.)

Kubaleck spoke the choice and pure language of an intellectual, his comments on people and things were to the point, incisive and witty, he was self-sufficing, that is, he did not make a display of his misery (and, as Dušek told me, his misery was great), he was resigned to his fate, but also prepared to stand up for himself and defend his rights up to the last consequences—an interesting man. He made not the slightest reference to his story when speaking to me ; our conversation was about aeroplanes—he said he had served in the flying corps of the Prussian army. He explained to me the various types, their advantages and defects, and he said that he himself had made experiments in the construction of a new machine but that the war had intervened and ended everything.

What a magnificent morning it must have been outside! The blue, rarified sky seemed to be loftier than usual, without even a cloudlet in it; only the first golden flashes of the rising sun were beginning to spread, and the swifts, drunk with the freshness of morning, were wheeling beneath it in joyful circles.

And there we were, pressing along through a crowd of talking, coughing and spitting men, in the smoke of reeking cigarettes, amid creatures whom human society had rejected from its midst, we whom blind justice had flung among them, we lovers of freedom, air and light, — “if only an aeroplane were to come down” suggested Kubaleck.

“I would get into it without any further reflection, and would fly over mountains, valleys and waters far, far beyond the black-yellow frontier-posts” I added.

A few tiny lads, scarcely more than fourteen years old, ran to and fro amongst us and picked up the ends of cigars and cigarettes.

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"Colleagues?"

"Yes. They stole some copper wire and sold it."

Rags on their bodies, rags on their feet, deplorable misery in their faces,—fourteen or fifteen years old, and the whole of life still before them.

We were back again in the room.

Mr. Kranz.

He was not tall, but he was sturdy, with a military cap slantwise on his head, an upturned moustache, a good-humoured, tolerant expression in his blue eyes—he stood in the middle of the room and looked around him.

"Kranz, this way" exclaimed Hedrich.

He came up to our table. I thanked him for the coffee; he waved my thanks aside, but said he wanted to ask me that if some day I were to write about what I had seen here and whom I had met, I should not forget him. His name was Kranz, Kranz*, the same as what rests upon coffins, Kranz, a thief and a rogue. But he said he would like to see his name some day written by an honest hand. Up till now he had been only in criminal records, in judges' verdicts, in the annals of the police court.

I believe that what others call a soul is a holy fire in man, greater in some, less in others, in others again only a tiny spark; and this holy fire forms our moral, artistic and human worth. At that moment I saw a spark of it flashing with humour in the eyes of this robber.

"Kranz, how much longer?" asked the sergeant.

"Five and a half, — if Papritz doesn't get into my way when I'm in a temper."

"Like yesterday evening?"

* German-wreath.

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"Yes, yesterday evening. If I'd had him there, he'd have gone flying through the room. I'd have made him jump."

"Kranz, how many did you put away?"

"Forty. There's forty empty bottles. But do they call that wine? I'd just like to get hold of that blackguard of a caterer. I'd tell him the mischief he does when he mixes such stuff."

"Kranz, has anything been heard about an amnesty?"

"They say so. It's supposed to be because of these victories in Russia. But that will be an amnesty for us, for the slight offenders, nothing for you, for serious criminals. Nothing, gentlemen."

He looked at us, indicated us and the patriots with a comprehensive gesture, and gave a devilish laugh.

"I must have a cucumber, — my head's all to pieces" he said more to himself, and went to the door.

"Open, you blockhead", and he banged upon it with his fists. "Sponner, you scoundrel", and he kicked until the door shook and rattled.

Sponner opened: "Come, come, come —"

"Idiot", answered Mr. Kranz, and walked out solemnly.

XVI.

I was doing the third kilometre with Messrs Fels and Goldstein.

A few people were looking at us, a few were watching the game of wolves and sheep at the other table, the sergeant had got Mr. Karl to whistle a tune from the Csardasfürstin and was endeavouring to whistle it after him. Papa Declich was standing on the pile of mattresses, cleaning his cap and taking a sly peep into the big yard where the imprisoned officers were exercising. Now and then Warder Sponner burst into the room, yelled out somebody's name,

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which meant that the man had a visitor; he would be led into the hall, where in the presence of the superintendent he would be allowed to converse for a few minutes about harmless topics. Everybody was smoking, and all the signs of a holiday mood were displayed in the cell and among the people.

Mr. Fiedler came in: "Is anybody going to attend mass in the chapel?"

Nobody came forward.

"Heathen", was his abusive comment, and he turned to me: "Wouldn't you like to have a look at it?"

"Thanks, but I am of no denomination."

"That doesn't matter. Jews are the only ones we don't let in there, that would be a bit too much. But haven't you some acquaintance with whom you would like to talk?" and Mr. Fiedler smiled mysteriously.

"I understand, but I have none. I alone was responsible for my verses. But how's your head, — does it ache?"

"Ach, Mr. M. as if somebody had been pounding it for me. Man is below the animals, far below the animals. An animal does not get in such a state. But this much I will say: If I have a boy, and that boy takes to drink, I'll kill him, I will, if I am the least bit fond of him" and he turned to the door.

"Mr. Fiedler, Mr. Fiedler" called several voices.

Mr. Fiedler waved his hands around his head, as if he were driving away a swarm of troublesome bees, and he was already outside. Warden Sponner shouted: "Those who have put their names down for writing letters today, — follow me. Wait, — no censorists. Other arrangements will be made for them."

Mr. Sponner led us through the corridor and explained to me: "A man has to shout, yes, shout, — but don't suppose that it caus-

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es me any amusement. A quiet word produces no effect. Nobody has an idea of what a gang these Polish Jews are. You'd need lungs like a blacksmith's bellows." (It occurred to me that there were no Polish Jews in our cell, but Mr. Sponner shouted there all the same; if one day I should write about this jail, I will print his explanation, — besides, that was the only reason he gave it me).

We entered the isolation room for those with infectious diseases. A few beds were prepared there, even a washing basin was ready; now two tables had been thrust in and pushed up against the beds on one side, and on the other they had put some forms. There was ink on the tables, they lent us pens and distributed paper, envelopes and post-cards, according to the number of applications. It was then possible to write. Forty or fifty people crowded round the tables, others were waiting until a place and a pen were available, and a defence-corps man with a bayonet stood at the door. When a man had finished writing, he waited till the warder came, handed over what he had written and then he could return to the cell. He was not allowed to fasten down the envelope, the letter would be handed over to the examining superintendent who would read it through, would cross out any compromising words or sentences beyond recognition, and, if it was God's will, would send it on. If a man wrote in his native language, the superintendent had the letter read, — and in certain cases also translated, — by a reliable interpreter, a process which always took several days. Interpreters were few and they were burdened with work of a much more important character, — the translation of confiscated letters, documents, pamphlets, books and, in my case, of verses as well.

It was like the inside of a hive, — one knocked against the other, all possible and impossible things were being asked for, pens were scraping, men were abusing them and everything, the stench was

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overwhelming. I had made up my mind to write as little as possible to those who were dear to me, but I wrote still less, — I am well, I am thinking of you, don't expect me, it certainly isn't pleasant here, enough.

And I was already back again in our cell and discovered that it was possible to heave a sigh of content even in jail.

Mr. Fels was sitting at our table with Mr. Goldenstein and they both had their heads propped up in their hands. A batch was just doing its turn of marching until the floor rattled. I sat down on the bed opposite the two brooders, and indulged in memories and thoughts, — nothing great, — only of the scratchy pen today. You see, forty and more years ago something of the same kind had irritated me. It was when I was beginning to learn to write. It was at Brandeis, — I was a poor schoolboy who did not venture to ask his poor parents for a farthing. Once by chance I discovered a store of pens, — there were always several of them lying beneath a window of the Archduke's castle at Brandeis. The revenue office was up there and the clerks used to throw them away when they were no longer fit for use. And I collected them and wrote with them in school and wrote my exercises at home with them. I wrote cumbersomely; the figures involuntarily acquired small pairs of slippers, the letters little black paunches. The teacher grumbled at me and threatened and finally also punished me, — it was no use, I could not help it. And I could not help it even when he sternly commanded me to buy new pens. Today a scratchy pen had returned into my life, and would come again a week later, a fortnight later, a year later, two years later, — now that I have learnt to write and have been put here for writing in a certain way. Fate has a confounded instinct for making circles in human life, and closes them exactly where they were begun.

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"Do you know, Mr. M., that I did not sleep all night?" said Mr. Fels suddenly in despair.

"Not even after all that walking?"

"That doesn't lie in the body, that lies in the soul, — just ask Goldenstein here."

Goldenstein gazed mournfully into vacancy and nodded: "Neither of us slept. Nor did Fröhlich. We lay thinking, and when our thoughts led to nothing, we looked at the lamp."

"And what are your troubles? What is it that worries you?"

"Business, business", sighed Mr. Goldenstein.

"They dragged us away and locked us up, — a man can't speak, he's not allowed to write, the officials are helpless and indifferent, — God knows what is happening", explained Mr. Fels.

"Very well. Business. Imagine that you had just read the letters in your office, let us say, — suddenly you fall from your chair, the doctor is called, examines you and diagnoses inflammation of the intestine, — an operation is most urgently necessary. You are taken to a sanatorium, and after a few hours you're on the operating table. You are cut open, the inflammation was acute, you rest in a small room, the nurse is sitting with you, you are only half alive, without interest for anything in the world, you cannot think or speak, but you feel only one thing: I am on the threshold of death, life may be closed to me at any moment. Business, — what do you care about business? Correspondence, — what folly. To live, above all and solely to live. You are here in jail, it is true, but how much better than in hospital. And, as is customary in Austria, everything has been forbidden you, but after a few days you will be allowed to write, visitors will arrive, and finally you will manage your affairs from here, just as well as from a sanatorium."

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"He is right", observed Mr. Fels to Goldenstein, and breathed with relief.

Goldenstein, it seemed, was a sceptic, or else he wanted more of this consolation: "Yes, but for several days now we have heard nothing about our wives, our children —"

"My boy is in the third form at school; here in Vienna we have a private Polish school" declared Mr. Fels.

"You are from Galicia, aren't you? Well now, imagine this again: You are returning home from somewhere by train. Suddenly the train stops, — what's the matter? The bridge in front of you has collapsed into a flooded river. You must return to the nearest station. Does not our room remind you of a dirty provincial waiting-room? Such a waiting-room in that station is now your abode. You are living there and waiting until the bridge has been repaired. When will that be? Nobody knows, — a month, two months, perhaps half a year, — you must wait, since there is no other way."

"He is right", nodded Mr. Fels again.

Mr. Goldenstein was silent.

I went on talking. I explained to them everything that came into my mind, and what might have come into theirs. How everything is relative in this life, how the attitude of society towards jail is changing, the very word "jail" today has not the same meaning among decent people as before the war. (die Masse macht es, that is due to the quantity of people whom military justice has thrust into the jail), how we shall depart, richer by unique memories, how we shall only begin to love freedom afterwards, — and perhaps it was not the reasons formulated in this manner, but my inner conviction which insinuated itself upon them involuntarily, — I gave these people a fragment of my fatalistic calm and mental equilibrium, — they thanked me and shook my hand, and Mr. Fels said with

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emotion that he would certainly otherwise have done "something rash".

And Mr. Goldenstein declared that he would sleep well that night.

After 11 o'clock the orderlies brought the midday meal. Papa Declich fished the meat out of the soup, but he only pecked at the vegetables and with a smile put the dish back on the kneading board. There was no cursing today, but merely the announcement that "it isn't fit for food" — yesterday's supplies from the caterer were not as yet used up.

Sunday was a day when prisoners were allowed to have supplies of washing and clothing brought them, — the clothing had to be disinfected, and a written declaration given as to the completed disinfection, and the declaration had to make it clear that they had been disinfected within the course of the last twenty-four hours.

They were given out to us immediately after the meal. Josefinka had brought me a cushion, a blanket, Odol and washing. My shirt was already as black as the floor and, being a modest man, I felt exceptional happiness at being able to put on clean linen.

One o'clock in the afternoon. Roll-call. This was the evening roll-call. We were counted, and that brought the day to an end. Today there would be no exercise.

But at two o'clock the door opened to admit a new colleague. There entered an elderly man with a straw hat, with pince-nez, with a bag in his hand and wearing a waterproof overcoat. He put the bag down by the wall, stood beside it and declared: "Gentlemen, I have been brought here by mistake, — within an hour I shall certainly be led out again."

We smiled.

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At four o'clock he stood up, took the bag and stationed himself by the door.

Six o'clock. He was still standing and waiting.

Eight o'clock. We had supper. Our new arrival had sat down on his bag. But by the door.

It was before nine. The skylark began to sing again. The skylark, the only creature which of its own accord inhabited this building. The straw mattresses were thrown about, people undressed. Mr. Karl asked the newcomer whether he would lie down. Yes, he would lie down, he was tired, but he would not undress. They would certainly call him and take him away that same night.

Half-past nine. He was lying in his overcoat and had removed only his hat. His skull was completely bald.

"I say", said the artillery-man who was his neighbour, "take off that overcoat, it smells horrible, and what's your name?"

"Simon Lamm", replied he, and took off his overcoat.

"Lamm from Brody?" asked Mr. Fels.

"Yes. And I am here by mistake. They said I wanted to keep my son out of the army, but my son had already joined, he lost his left hand, has an artificial one now and works in an office, — they're sure to take me away from here to-night."

"Take off your things, Mr. Lamm, and try and get to sleep." Mr. Fels stood up, came over to me and said softly: "One of the best Polish Jews in Galicia. A landed proprietor, — of course he's a beggar today. The Russians are managing his estates, but he was the benefactor of the whole district."

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Mr. Simon Lamm undressed: "Well, if they come and fetch me, I shall be dressed in five minutes."

The room roared with laughter.

XVII

Monday evening. Monday has always been a repulsive day to me, and it seemed as if it became still more repulsive to me in jail.

And it was as if the whole of number 60 agreed with this view of mine; in the morning they got up grumpy and cursing, — only Messrs. Fels and Goldenstein announced that they had at last been able to sleep. The artillery-man did not even want to dress. Hedrich yawned till his eyes flowed with tears, Budi frowned, — in fact nowhere was there a pleasant glance and a contented word. Our arrival of yesterday, Mr. Simon Lamm, again donned his waterproof overcoat, put on his hat and waited. He did not even want to go out for exercise so as not to miss the messenger of freedom. He then went after all when the sergeant had assured him that he would be called even from the yard; but during exercise he kept turning his head to the door where the defence-corps man stood with a bayonet.

When we returned, he took Hedrich aside, — our barber's good-natured blue eyes had probably inspired Mr. Lamm with confidence — and he asked him who I was. For I had a special bed, a blue blanket, and the inmates of the room held me in some esteem. The worthy Hedrich who was fond of hoaxing people, — but he did it in such a good-natured and pleasant manner that nobody could be angry with him, — informed him in a whisper that I was a criminal worse than a two-fold murderer, whereupon Mr. Lamm nodded and declared that he had immediately noticed me, and was sure that

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I must be something of the sort. He then went on waiting quietly.

A repulsive Monday. We were not even inclined for our usual "scorching".

Papa Declich brought in a bucket of water and began to clean out. Budi climbed up on to the straw mattresses and began to snore. Old Nicolodi, wrapped up in his plaid, sat on his box and stared at the floor. Tironi had made friends with Dr. Smrecsanyi and they were talking together. The artillery-man was looking for somebody who would play wolves and sheep with him — at that moment Papritz burst into the room.

Papritz with a rattling sword and his overcoat buttoned up, — a successful replica of the German monarch, — even with his upturned moustache. He stood there and looked about him, — number 60 grew silent, otherwise nothing happened. "Habt Acht" he belledow angrily, "who is in charge of this room?"

The sergeant pushed platoon-leader Kretzer forward, and he stepped up and reported himself. Papritz looked him up and down twice from head to foot with a withering glance, then burst forth: "Don't you know the proper thing to do? When I enter the room you've got to bring them to attention, come to attention yourself and report yourself to me. And the whole room has got to stand at attention, nobody's allowed to move, — you miserable lot, — I'll give you what for, I'll teach you, — what do you mean by standing there like that, you blockhead you", he snapped at Mr. Fröhlich, "I'll have you put in solitary confinement for twenty-four hours, — and look at this, there's one of them lying fast asleep, — come down, come down" — (Budi jumped down and opened his sleepy eyes in terror) — "this is a fine collection, look at this, a volunteer in the bargain, — and you take off your hat" he snarled at Lamm.

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From the corridor could be heard the voice of Kranz, the president of the orderlies, singing :

In fernem Afrika
da wächst der Paprika. —

Papritz turned pale and red, but did not burst out. He threatened and yelled for a little longer, then he departed.

"He's still soaked from yesterday", observed Hedrich. Mr. Lamm put his straw hat on afresh.

"I shan't report myself to him" the sergeant began to declare.

"It's a piece of impudence" said Mr. Fröhlich reminiscently, "Somebody ought to have pointed out to him that we're brought to attention only before officers, and that he as an N. C. O. in charge of accounts has no right to wear an officer's sword."

"And besides, he's got no right to carry out inspections and to make such threats" added the sergeant. And Mr. Fels felt sorry for Lamm. He took him by the arm and led him up to my bed.

"Mr. M., yesterday you set us up and encouraged us so much, look after Mr. Lamm here, tell him something."

"Take off your hat, remove your overcoat, hang it up yonder and try to make yourself at home, — you'll be here several months."

Mr. Lamm looked at me horrified, he took off his overcoat rather waveringly, removed his hat and sat down.

"That's right", remarked Mr. Fels. "And what about our marching?"

There was nothing else for it, we started off.

We walked silently. Warden Sponner came in, called out several names, Tironi and Dr. Smrecsanyi amongst them : "Take your things and come up to the first floor." They had been transferred.

They took their leave and departed.

We went on walking.

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Several people expressed aloud their satisfaction at the departure of Tironi. A hideous man with that cough of his, — the sergeant lost his taste for food when the fellow coughed.

When we had finished our "scorching", we sat down on a matress and looked on while the second batch marched.

Then I began to crave for something to read. One volume of Gerstäcker and something by Ganghofer were lying about on the table. I thought to myself "Das ist kein Kaffeehaus vor mir" (as the Viennese Jews say). "Budi, have you got anything to read?"

Budi gave me a few stories by Rodenbach and Napoleon III's "Life of Julius Caesar". I started off with the stories. The author of "Bruges la morte" disappointed me. Anybody who has become accustomed to read the honest and profound Russians, rarely finds satisfaction in foreign literatures. Everything there is so corpse-like, affected, machine-made and untrue to life, — it would really be a pity to waste time on it, if there were not so much to spare. If somebody had taken it into his head to sweep the floor, I would rather have watched the movements of the broom and the whirling of the dust, — there was more life in that than in these bloodless people about whom I read. But Voronin was gone and the broom was deserted.

After the midday meal, of which I again touched nothing, I was summoned to the superintendent in the Tigergasse. A defence-corps man in front of me, a defence-corps man behind me, — the streets and the people as strange as if they were from another world, — I see how accustomed to the jail I had become. With composure I imagined that this would be the second cross-examination which Dr. Frank had promised me for the previous Friday or Saturday, but I was not pleased, — I did not believe that it would mean a turning-point in my destiny.

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Frank, well-groomed, clean-shaven as on the first occasion and equally restrained in manner, informed me that I had a visitor.

Dr. T., a German, whom I had known for quite a number of years. The first man who had visited me in the Rudolfinerhaus after my operation, the first one who was visiting me in jail.

"My dear M" he began, and his voice trembled.

"Doctor, no sentimentality, I have been imprisoned because of four stupid poems."

"My dear sir", intervened Dr. Frank.

"Oh, I see. It's not allowed. Very well. As you see, I am in good health, in jail of course, but for eight hours a day I have the most glorious freedom."

"How is that? Do you go for a walk?" asked Dr. T. in astonishment, and even Frank looked at me inquisitively.

"No. I sleep for eight hours and you know that dreams are an important part of my life,—and I dream about liberty. Night after night I have dreams about freedom, and if this estimable official here (I turned to Frank) had the least idea of it, he would station a defence-corps man by my bed to wake me up every ten minutes: Hi, hi, are you dreaming about freedom? That is forbidden, you are in jail."

Dr. Frank gave a forced smile.

"And in other respects?"

"In other respects I live amid dirt, and contemplate our beloved Austria from below, which is also very interesting."

"Do you need anything?"

"The State gives me everything that I cannot need,—thank you."

"Gentlemen", and Dr. Frank drew out his watch, "I am sorry to tell you that I have a great deal of work."

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"Doctor, we will not hinder this estimable official in his activity. He has in truth a great deal of important work to do."

My friend had to wait a moment until I had gone,—obviously in order that we might not communicate with each other outside,—the devil trust such a poet!

The defence-corps men led me back and handed me over to the superintendent. When I was back again in number 60, my eyes hurt me from the unaccustomed light in the street.

And again the minutes and hours dragged on, each one had leaden soles, none was in haste.

I began to read Julius Caesar and remembered his commentaries on the Gallic war. *Gallia omnis divisa est in partes tres*. Napoleon held on to them. What a difference too, between them and the "Germania" of Tacitus. Caesar is like an unconcerned and self-assured mathematician, his reader has a feeling of security and believes, but not in the case of Tacitus. And see the elegant style of which this Napoleon III. was a master. And the knowledge he had. An Emperor.

The room resounded with footsteps, otherwise everybody was still in the grip of Monday's repulsive humour. It was quiet. If somebody made a joke, it was unbecoming and out of place,—nobody even smiled.

At the afternoon exercise I walked with the engineer. He wished that he had a few pounds of dynamite.

After exercise, Mr. Fels again sat down beside me. Did I really think that they, the censorists, would be granted written communication with their families, and would they be allowed to receive visitors. Otherwise, his mind was already at rest. And when we left here, would I do him the pleasure of dining with him and his

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family. I had really saved his life, he said, by what I had told him the day before.

Then he called Mr. Lamm and told him that if he felt anxious and unhappy he should apply to me for comfort. I was wiser than any rabbi.

"I know, and a very dangerous man" declared Mr. Lamm,—it was clear that he had not properly understood.

I read a little longer. And when it began to get dark, I was glad that this day was coming to an end.

Such a Monday had in truth no other value except that it brought us a little nearer,—to what? To what, actually? To freedom? To life? Or perhaps merely to the end of it?

XVIII

Mr. Fiedler acted as our official newspaper. Day by day he brought in the letters that had arrived, announced who would be transferred from our cell and where, whether there would be many new arrivals in his place, reported the amount of money which had arrived for one and the other, then under the heading of "Miscellaneous News" or "Day by Day" he related something fresh from the interior of the jail, which, by the way, might have been just an anecdote, and then he went to the neighbouring cell. The letters which we received were, of course, censored by the examining superintendent. Dr. Frank consistently erased and blackened in the manner of the Tsarist censors the name of each man who sent me greetings, the names of people I knew, about whom my correspondent informed me that they were ill, that they had died or merely that they asked whether I needed anything, — such circumspection on

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the part of a State certainly affects an imprisoned author in a variety of ways.

If money arrived for anybody, Mr. Fiedler announced only the sum,— never the sender. Evidently also a higher regulation prompted by State cautiousness. But that at least brought about humorous situations ; somebody received money which he had not expected, as a rule the amounts used to be small, and somebody else kept waiting and waiting, could not and did not wait any longer. During war-time in Austria immoderate quantities of land-sharks appeared on the scene, provisions sharks on the railways, pecuniary sharks in the jails. You may have written for money, and received the reply that it had already been sent, — day by day Mr. Fiedler came and reported arrivals, but for you nothing had come. You lodge a complaint — in vain. You ask Mr. Fiedler to have another look in the office, he had a look, there was nothing. But when you began to threaten with a statement to the examining accountant, Mr. Fiedler went once more into the office, and lo and behold : "300 crowns have just arrived for you. Just this moment" or, as Mr. Fiedler good-naturedly added, it had been carelessly entered up, and now they have discovered it.

For although Mr. Fiedler was a convict, the official duties which he fulfilled in our superintendent's office, placed him upon "their" side. And he had also the discreetness of persons belonging to the official caste ; he never uttered a single word which might demean the officials, the Government and its authorities in our eyes. His "Miscellaneous News" and "Day by Day" were to a hair as innocent as the corresponding headings in any official paper.

Dušek, who was fond of coining aphorisms, said : "Nowhere in Austria does so much stealing go on as in jail." Then Papa Declich, who next to Dušek was the senior member of our room, had

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from his experience fashioned for himself the following eternal truth: "Tutti Falotti".

It was strictly forbidden to read other newspapers. Nevertheless we read them and wondered why. The offensive of our armies against Italy was making glorious progress, we were victorious at Arsiero, Asiago, in the interior of the Empire the profoundest calm and contentment prevailed; if here and there some ruffian grumbled that we had cards for everything and could get nothing, he would read that France is threatened by starvation, England is exhausted and Italy also has nothing. Why we, with the fare we received, were strictly forbidden to read such elevating news, we could not understand.

The censorists obtained the "Neue Freie Presse", Hedrich brought back with him the "Kronen-Zeitung" and the "Neues Wiener Journal" from his shaving errands. Kranz read the "Extra-Blatt" and sent it to me at 9 o'clock, at noon we had the "Zeit" and the "Neues Tagblatt", — from the superintendent's office.

The censorists had at last been permitted to get into touch with the outside world. When Mr. Fels informed me of it, he added by way of commendation to me: "You were right. You took a correct view of everything."

The worthy authorities had certainly pondered long and thoroughly as to how they would be safe from their Semitic artfulness. And this is what they finally devised: They gave them a sheet of paper into each cell, and one after another the censorists wrote briefly and concisely messages to their families, business orders, and directions to their offices, — in order that their souls might be at rest, and that the State might not be guilty of ruining their business careers. The examining accountant then read everything through, censored it, and in his office these messages were copied

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on to postcards and sent off. When replies arrived from the families and offices, the censorists did not receive them into their hands, but one of the accountant's clerks came, had them all summoned into one cell, and read the replies to them. In this way the Monarchy protected itself against all possible dodges of those who otherwise were everywhere its favourites, but who had here lapsed into a condition of guilt.

As soon as Mr. Fiedler appeared in the cell with a sheet of clean paper, everybody rushed up to him to say that he wanted some too. Mr. Fiedler smiled and replied to these requests only with a shrug of the shoulders; he even refused to give the censorists more than the authorities had specified, but Mr. Fels, like the Roman Curtius, one day resolved upon a leap into the abyss. He uttered a few quiet words to Mr. Fiedler, the latter listened attentively to them, and uttered likewise quiet words in reply; whereupon Mr. Fels called Mr. Goldenstein aside, conversed with him as well, Mr. Goldenstein nodded, and said it was a matter of course, — and after a while Mr. Fiedler was back again with several sheets of paper. He also offered me some, in case I should like to make a note of this or that. I refused it.

For the following Saturday Mr. Fels gave an order to the caterer who supplied us with food and other things, for a shirt; Mr. Goldenstein ordered one as well, the third censorist, Mr. Fröhlich, ordered a broom and a clothes-brush; then, when on the Saturday evening the pious sabbath singing resounded from the cell of the rabbinate students, and was immediately drowned by the wild circus-music from the orderlies' room, Mr. Fels smiled and said to Mr. Goldenstein: "They are drinking away our shirts."

"And my brush and broom" added Mr. Fröhlich.

When the first replies arrived for the censorists as a result of the

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relations they had established with the outside world, and had been read to them in number 62, our trio returned in a state of considerable indignation. I was sitting on my bed and reading Julius Caesar; Mr. Fels begged my pardon for interrupting me, but they wanted to tell me about it, so that I could judge for myself. The clerk who had read their replies to them had intentionally employed a Jewish accent in such a way that the thing was a scandal. And to think that these were the words of their wives, messages from their children.

"And this clerk is a volunteer, an educated man" remarked Mr. Goldenstein.

"And a Jew himself, assuredly a Jew" added Mr. Fröhlich excitedly.

"If you had heard how he read to Mauthner: "Es küsst dich ewig deine Lene" said Mr. Fels, warming up.

"Or to me: Moritzchen ist brav und Alfred lernt fleissig, — you know, I really thought I would tell him about it" said Mr. Fröhlich angrily.

"And didn't anybody say anything to him at all? Didn't you interrupt him?"

"Interrupt him? We should only have made our position worse."

I see that I have passed over a number of days in my narrative. One resembled the other, all were as grey as the dust on the high road, each one seemed to be endless, and yet, when one looks back at them, they vanished as quickly as if somebody had lashed them with a whip. Dušek was right. — long days, but short weeks.

I had visitors.

My wife arrived from Prague. Dr. Frank in measured tones offered her a chair, and then sat down with us to complete the triangle, and listened. She was calm and I was grateful to her for it. "They" must not see signs of weakness in any of us. She informed me that

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a certain journalist explained the cause of my arrest by saying that I wanted to get away,—to Switzerland. A poet and run off? No, a politician clears out,—that is the natural order of things, not a poet. I was there “for poems of a compromising nature,” as Frank himself remarked on that occasion.

“The children?”

“They are ill. They have the measles.”

“Remember me to them.”

“Perhaps you would like some books?” suggested Frank. “You can have books brought to you — of course, I must look through them first.”

“Thanks. I don’t want any.”

“But you used to say,” declared my wife, “that if you were to be imprisoned, I should send you Molière.”

“You could read Molière,” announced Frank.

“No thanks.”

Frank indicated to my wife by a gesture that she should send it to me all the same. And he drew out his watch . . .

I stood up. The ten minutes had elapsed. My wife could return to Prague again . . .

After a few days another visit. Madam M. L. also from Bohemia.

As the defence-corps men were leading me into the Tigergasse, I caught sight of Josefinka in one of the streets. Poor thing, she stood there and with wide-open eyes stared at her master.

Madam M. L. had three magnificent roses in her hand and she gave them to me.

“Excuse me” interfered Dr. Frank, “that is not allowed.”

“But look, they are roses, there is nothing in them — ”

“I am sorry, the regulations.”

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"Take them away again, madam," I said, "where I am living, man alone can survive, but not a flower."

"May he smell them?" asked Madam M. L. with delicate irony.

"Yes, he may smell them."

The ten minutes had elapsed, — Frank drew out his watch. Madam M. L. could return to Bohemia.

We lost the old man Nicolodi. Warder Sponner came in, took him away to the office, and when he brought him back half an hour later, the old man began to collect his belongings, — he was discharged from jail and was to proceed to somewhere in upper Austria, into an internment camp. Mr. Fiedler carried his box into the superintendent's office, — they ordered a cab for the old fellow to convey him to the station under escort of a defence-corps man. He took his leave touchingly, for everybody in the cell he had a pleasant word, which however nobody understood, and everybody said something to him in reply which he also did not understand, — as is usual among the Austrian nations. The old man was an Italian, and in our room there were only three people who could make themselves understood to him, — Budi, Papa Declich and myself.

While he was taking his leave, Mr. Karl was meddling with his bag, — the old man had a small handbag with a piece of bread, butter and three bottles of wine he had saved up in it, — whereupon with conspicuous readiness he carried this bag for him into the superintendent's room.

On the following evening Mr. Karl began drinking away merrily. He was drinking Nicolodi's wine, the three bottles, in place of which he had slipped three bottles filled with water into his bag.

On the morning of the following day Mr. Fiedler burst furiously into the room, swearing at the dishonesty of the world, at the thievishness which flourished even in jail, at the rascality which was

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without equal,—the bottles of wine which had already been charged into water, he had put aside for himself in the office, and he had given the old man for his journey three others, which he had filled up,—also with water.

XIX.

Days passed and weeks elapsed.

Sometimes I used to look back and reflect, and with amazement I became aware that the horizon of my world had thoroughly contracted, and that I had already quite accommodated myself to my surroundings by a process of mimicry. I read the papers daily,—but in doing so, I had the impression that they published news from some distant star. The offensive in Italy suspended. Brusilov advancing against Czernowitz, the waves of war were surging to and fro; I knew that until it was over I could not dream of the end of my stay there—and yet I did not desire the end—so thoroughly had the mimicry worked.

The events of my little world began to interest me more than I had surmised on my arrival. What was happening in Bohemia, I did not know. From the newspapers I had the impression that the whole country was snowed under by the censorship, cautious and well wrapped-up people were walking upon frequently trodden paths, whether our land was slumbering, or whether it was dead, was difficult to guess. All was still. If at least a single voice had shouted: We are alive, we are thinking of you all. There was not a sound. And if anything was heard, it was the report of a new arrest, of a new investigation.

I took my exercise, read Julius Caesar, did my eight kilometres every day, in the evening I paid heed so as not to miss the warbling

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of the skylark, when we were chatting after supper, our heads so close together that the smoke of our cigars merged into a single column; sometimes in the passage I met Dr. Kramář, Rašín, Choc, Buřival, Vojna, Manager Pilát,—I was returning from exercise with our batch, they were going out, — I always looked closely into the eyes of our people, to see whether the jail had laid waste their souls, and besides, I observed the dramas and farces which were being woven by life, that careless and sometimes thoroughly vulgar author, amid the vicissitudes of the people vegetating around me.

A whim on the part of Papritz suddenly forbade the Jewish philanthropic society to supply the rabbinate candidates with ritually prepared food. The candidates were very upset: they sent a deputation to the superintendent, the superintendent shrugged his shoulders. The candidates announced that they would do without food altogether, that they would rather die of hunger, and that the responsibility would fall upon the prison authorities. And they began a hunger strike. That is to say, they refused the prison food, which was refused also by us who were not on hunger strike; evening after evening they sang their proud religious chants, and where there was an opportunity, they slipped into other rooms, pleaded for bread, exchanged cigars and cigarettes for sardines and butter, begged for cheese and eggs,—and continually threatened the worthy authorities that they would perish of hunger. The superintendent laughed, the warders related about the banquets that the dear candidates arranged before they began singing, and their singing was regularly interrupted by Krantz with his circus music.

We had a new arrival. An elderly man with scanty white hair, with blue and devout eyes, clean-shaven, subdued in manner, Hedrich had a look at him, and assured me that he was some Catholic priest. The newcomer took a glance round, stepped joyfully up to Messrs.

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Fels and Goldenstein, Mr. Simon Lamm also addressed him as an old acquaintance, and so the arrival breathed a sigh of relief: "Thank God, — I feel quite at home." He was Mr. Aron Wilder, a hotel-keeper from Cracow, and he had been sent to us because "he disliked military service too much." This class of persons who did not push their way to the front, Papa Declich ranked among the Fallotti. Mr. Wilder lent Mr. Fels his watch for the period of their residence in common,—by chance it had not been taken away from him in the head office,— Mr. Fels announced that now he was "nearly" quite satisfied here, for to be without a watch is as bad as to be without a left hand. Mr. Wilder was already acquainted with several jails from experience, various transactions connected with supplies of goods had always brought him there, he gave an account of them and compared them with the present one, which cut a very poor figure in comparison: the Galician jails are boarding houses, hotels, sanatoria, — this one was an unhealthy and repulsive den.

During exercise the engineer became rather communicative. When he had been taken to Field Marshal Mattuschka at Moravská Ostrava, and would not admit that he was a Russian spy, the military dignitary had snarled at him: "Of course, you're a Czech". "Excuse me, I have a Czech name, Kubaleck, it is true, but I am a German. I do not understand a word of Czech". "Kubaleck, — a Czech name, Czech origin, and if you are a German, then you have high treason in your blood." And the name of this dignitary was Mattuschka.

When he had been transferred to Vienna, they had interned his wife and two little children in a camp at Chocen. After a few months he was summoned before the superintendent who announced to him dryly that according to a notification received from the commandant of the camp at Chocen, his wife had died of typhus on such and

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such a day, and his children were in an orphan asylum at Pardubice. "At that moment I became the wreck of a man. My wife dead, my children will be brought up as Czechs, by the time I come out, I shall not recognize them, I myself shall be a stranger to them and shall not be able to make myself understood to them with a single word" he said with such convincing emotion in his voice that I believed him and gave him two cigars.

I then got into the habit of giving him two cigars daily—he always related to me a portion of this heartrending story of his. Dušek also helped him as far as possible, Budi too,—only Papa Declich stubbornly kept silence about him.

Somebody gave the sergeant-major at the main entrance three magnificent peonies on my behalf, and the superintendent himself brought them to me into the room. My fellow-inmates came running up, inspected this dark-red greeting from the outside world, Hedrich sniffed at them and wondered that they had no scent. I had to announce upon occasion to Frank that I had received them, that they were on the table in our cell, that the State continued to exist, and that nothing whatever had happened to the jail.

And then there was another new arrival. A man like a cat, I should call him, but a nice cat. Tender, velvety eyes, all of him in fact, was velvety,—movements, gait, speech,—he was, by the way, a Magyar, I did not understand much of what he said. The jail produced a home-like impression upon him, he was surprised by nothing, he was familiar with everything; it was the very first night he had slept there (he arrived in the evening), and already when we returned from exercise, a hand thrust into the room a small package which he quickly hid among the straw mattresses. When things were quiet and the door was shut, he took it out and opened it: Salami, bread, and a box of very fine tobacco cut thinly

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like a woman's golden hair, — the whole room opened its eyes greedily, but the cat-like man glided alertly up to me, as if he had been made of india-rubber, looked into my eyes devotedly and tenderly, and handing me the open package, he lisped: "Tessek".

I refused; "En nem szivarzok cigaretten" (It is true that I smoked cigarettes and am fond of them, but my knowledge of Magyar did not contrive to produce any other sentence).

"Tessek," he pleaded afresh.

I smiled my gratitude and shook my head. He became sad as if my refusal had really hurt him, and went away. He did not offer them to anybody else.

After a while Hedrich arrived from a shaving ramble, brought the "Extrablatt", mysteriously called me into a corner behind the straw mattresses, and pointed out to me an item of local news. The king of Magyar pickpockets had been arrested. The previous day in a tram. And this was our new colleague. As he also had a decided objection to soldiering and had demonstrated this by ostentatiously absenting himself from the Emperor's service, they had locked him up in the military prison. And put him with us. But before midday he was taken off by Warden Sponner—to a safer place, so it was said.

"Because he is a king" remarked our worthy Hedrich.

Dr. Frank again had me sent for.

On the way I once more caught sight of Josefinka, — was the girl loitering around the jail day after day?

Frank informed me that I should have a visitor at 10 o'clock; further, that there was a copy of Molière for me, which he would have sent to me in the jail during the course of the afternoon; finally, that there was an application from my wife for permission to get my food from a restaurant.

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I was polite and pleasant to all people in the whole jail, but this Frank somehow got on my nerves. For me he was a direct representative of the thing which had flung me into the cesspool of human society, he was the agent of the power which had acted so ruthlessly towards my whole nation, he was a German who had taken over my case without knowing a word more about me, my work, my position, than he was informed by the police reports, on the day of my arrest he had promised that I should have a second inquiry into the merits of my case "on Friday or Saturday" (the assuaging, hopeful tone of his voice was still ringing in my ears, and I, fool that I was, had actually believed him for several hours), as soon as he uttered the word "application", I burst forth: "Throw it into the waste-paper basket."

"The application does not come from you, but from your wife" he remarked with a superior smile.

"And I want you to throw this application into the waste-paper basket, I wish for nothing from you."

"The application will take its official course" he said dryly.

A knock at the door. The visitor entered, — Professor Ehrlich of the faculty of law in the University of Czernowitz, Dr. Preminger's former teacher. We were acquainted before the beginning of the war, he had been recommended to me by my friend Kotera, he used to come to see me, and we would discuss literature, politics, things of the present and future—now he was giving me a look up in jail.

"Professor, behold the better and juster Austria which you have so often predicted to me, — it is already here and I am in it" was my greeting to him.

The worthy official sat down with us to complete the triangle.

"Patience, poet, all will be well. You know, Dante: Hell,—Purgatory,—Paradise."

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"Thanks for the pleasant prospect. In the meanwhile on every side we hear voices shrieking and shouting: *Lasciate ogni speranza.* And by the way, do you know that I am beginning to believe in the immortality of the soul?"

"Ah, you are studying?"

"Yes. Austria from below. And I have found that the spirit of the late Clement Václav Lothar Prince Metternich still lives and rules in it."

"You Czechs, it seems to me" began Professor Ehrlich, as if he had made preparations for this lecture, "all have a leaning towards martyrdom."

I burst out laughing: "Yes, the worthy authorities here", and with my foot I indicated the bundles and boxes of all sorts of lumber, collected during domiciliary searches, "have piles of applications; we are the ones who applied for searches, for arrests, for legal proceedings, in a word, — for martyrdom."

"Even that will pass away and things will be different" said the optimistic professor to assuage me.

Thereupon he entered into a conversation with Frank, my only contribution to which was the single aphorism that the Austrian State was suffering from hypertrophy of officialdom. They spoke of grades of rank, of promotion, of Preminger, of these and those professors, and they enjoyed themselves so much they did not notice how time was flying. A quarter of an hour, half an hour. Frank still did not take out his watch.

I stood up: "Pardon me, gentlemen, I must go home."

Hours and days passed, none of them were welcomed, and none of them were looked back upon with regret.

Hedrich often sat down opposite me, propped his elbow up on the table, with a cigar dangling between his lips, and said with convic-

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tion: "Do you know, Mr. M., I would have no objection to staying here for life. This jail doesn't worry me at all. The people here are pleasant, straightforward—"

This worthy lad projected his guileless, unassuming spirit into everything.

But have I really any grievance against anyone? Thieves, sharpers,— it is true, but is there amongst them a single one in whom there is not at least a slight spark of holy fire?

XX.

I finished reading the biography of Julius Caesar. A fascinating book,— in the hours when I was reading it, I was not in jail. If the worthy authorities had an inkling how and whither a man's spirit is carried away by such reading, they certainly would not allow any books here at all. If the body is deprived of liberty, then the spirit ought not to be allowed to rove about,—and certainly not in ancient Gaul and in times two thousand years removed. But that is the old materialistic slovenliness; they attend to the body, but the spirit,— what do they care about the spirit!

This work is a strictly scientific history of Julius Caesar, the greatest genius of ancient times, and a rhapsodic apotheosis of the idea of Napoleonism. It is as if behind the figure of the Roman imperator there stood the figure of the first French Emperor, illuminated by every deed, every notion, every plan of the Roman. And nowhere can it be said that the book, as a result, suffers from an obtrusive political tendency,— it is a thoroughly honest, scientific work, written in a witty, sparkling style such as only French historians can contrive to write. There is only one circumstance to which I take exception, not in the text, but on the cover: the author's name,

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Napoleon III, — no, this book did not proceed from his pen. The spirit might have been his, the involuntary tendency, above all, might have been his, but this work was not produced by him. That unfortunate political intriguer, who let himself be led into a Sedan; the clumsy stylist, whose journalistic drafts, discovered in the Tuilleries after September 2nd 1870, aroused only a compassionate smile, this weary "Sphinx", gliding through the diaries of the Goncourts, — decidedly did not possess such a fund of intellect as to be able to produce the history of Julius Caesar. It was Duruy, Victor Duruy, to whom Bonapartism, or I should rather say Napoleonism, was a religion, who certainly wrote this work from the first line to the last — the Sphinx, at the most, attended to the archaeological discoveries relating to ancient Gaul. The history of the Roman Empire, which Duruy issued under his own name, is a direct continuation of Julius Caesar — the same style, the same spirit. It is Duruy of whose enthusiastic Napoleonic creed in the preface to the memoirs of Barras I could not help thinking as I read: that before the countenance of eternity it is no crime to have people slain. That the human plant has a claim only to a short span of life, he who cuts it down before its time, helps it, for it then springs up anew. But it is a crime to degrade and dishonour the soul of a nation—man passes away—the soul is left, new mortals are born, but there is no means to bring about the uplifting of the soul, for wounds inflicted on the soul are deep, and heal very slowly. And Napoleon I did not commit the crime of damaging the soul of a nation. And a nation which often hastens to dissolution and decay, is preserved by war, as by a necessary surgical operation, — but how great was the error of Duruy, whose view and knowledge of the past was so clear, in respect of events and persons of the present. Precisely this Napoleon III, whose throne was to be supported both by Julius

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Caesar and the great Corsican, degraded, dishonoured France and led it to its downfall. And here again the truth is that poets see clearer and better than historians. Victor Hugo judged and condemned Napoleon III, and history has shown him to be in the right. Our Rieger—assuredly in agreement with his father-in-law—submitted a memorandum to this same Napoleon III a few years before Sedan. That Mickiewicz, a poet, regarded him as the saviour of Poland, oh, he might believe it then. Half Europe rose up against the despotic Tsar Nicholas I, and Napoleon, that great and glorious name, stood at the head of this coalition. This was six years after the spring of 1848, when Europe seemed to have recognized that "Leipzig was the cross and Waterloo the grave of its liberty."

Yes, such are the reflections that occur to one when reading in jail. These and also others. The State in its own interests really ought to watch most carefully over the spirit of those whom it imprisons.

It is a pity that the history of Julius Caesar is unfinished. It breaks off on the threshold of the civil war. And the worst of it is that after such a book which fills the soul with emotion, one has no desire to read anything else. I had already obtained my Molière, but I will here break off for a little.

What were our young friends doing in the room? The same as usual. One batch was doing its spell of walking, the sergeant was sitting opposite Mr. Karl and gazing into his mouth, while Mr. Karl was whistling some Vienna ditty to him; the censorists were playing wolves and sheep—for a bottle of wine and three cigars again—Papa Declich was standing on the straw mattresses, very laboriously brushing his cap and giving a sly glance into the courtyard, the artillery-man had crept with somebody else into a corner and was playing at cards, — ah yes, his fellow-player had reached us that morning; he was a corporal in the mechanical transport corps at

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Klosterneburg, and he had been put in prison on account of two bicycles. Two rubber-tired bicycles which he had seen while out for a walk with his comrade, who had also been in prison since that morning on the first storey; the bicycles were lying by the roadside in a field, and they both declared that they did not know how they had got there; but the examining superintendent declared that they did know how they got there. Although he saw that I was reading and did not want to be disturbed, he had already come up to me three times and explained that he was innocent, and how the bicycles were lying there, and how they had gone past quite by chance and had caught sight of them,— it was not until I pointed out to him that it was their duty for one of them to wait by the things they had found, and for the other to go and report it immediately, and when Mr. Fels told him that I had been a soldier and that my opinion would probably be correct, then he went away once and for all, came to terms with the artillery-man who told him the story of his confounded boots, whereupon they started gambling.

Papritz had me called into the office.

He stood up in front of me, looked me up and down several times from tip to toe, and burst forth: "You have sent in an application to be allowed to get your food from a restaurant? What ground have you for that?"

"I have sent in no application, I have no ground."

"There lies your application" he thundered.

"It is not my application."

"But you know about it."

"Yes, Dr. Frank showed it to me, and I asked him in most emphatic terms to throw it into the waste-paper basket."

"So you want to dictate to us what we are to do? A fine state of things! You have been ill under an operation, you will get your

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food from a restaurant. I will not tolerate any wilfulness, just remember that. You will let Fiedler have a list of what you want to eat."

I went no further and remained silent. My stubbornness was broken. For Dušek's theory that it sufficed for a man to eat once a day in the evening did not somehow hold good in my case. Those hams which often used to have the first indications of decadence, the rancid butter, the cheese from which the mouldiness had to be pared away, no, it was not possible, I used to eat only just enough so as not to have a feeling of cold emptiness in my stomach, but at the same time I was continually hungry. If I had got the better of Papritz—the final authority—and had my own way, I should have gone on starving courageously, but as it was, — ye gods, pardon a man for being too much a man, it was more agreeable. When I left Papritz I was quite elated.

And with Mr. Fiedler we arranged a menu for ten days, — soup, meat, an extra dish, a bottle of wine. Coffee in the morning, coffee in the afternoon.

Mr. Kranz by the way, was now bringing me black coffee in the morning and towards evening. This coffee was better than that issued to us, and it was sweetened. I divided it with our batch. Papa Declich mixed his share with the ordinary coffee, added condensed milk, and sipped at it then throughout the day. It was about this time that I was really impressed by Kranz; he probably noticed that I was not well, and when we were returning from exercise, he called me behind the corner of the passage and thrust upon me a small bottle of cognac, real cognac. "Keep your eye on it, or it will get stolen" he advised me with the air of one who knows.

I do not remember ever having eaten more greedily and eagerly, or having enjoyed food so much as that first meal from the restaur-

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ant. Perhaps not even during the starvation of my student days, nor when I was in the army. I gulped down the soup, fell upon the meat, but then my enjoyment ceased; I happened to look round the room and saw about fifteen pairs of eyes, not human eyes, but starving, greedy, brutish eyes, watching my exertions. They sank, turned away, but I had seen them, and every morsel stuck in my throat. Papa Declich received a piece of meat, Budi a piece of pudding, in order that I might bribe my conscience and go on eating.

I ate my fill, in spite of the sharing. Papa Declich prepared a cup of his cold black coffee, I lit a cigar and a pleasant mood came upon me. Thank goodness, in that way we shall hold out for months, years, and survive everything safely and enter into a different epoch and different conditions. And it will be better than it is, perhaps will even be quite good. We have lived with Austria but have not grown together with it; everything we have done was only temporary, as it were; even when we ate, we ate standing and with a walking-stick in our hands, and when we lay down to sleep, we slept fully dressed and prepared at any hour to start on a journey. Like Simon Lamm, when he arrived, like the Old Testament Jews in the land of Egypt.

These and similar things were my cogitations, as with a feeling of comfort, I watched the smoke of my cigar. Resignation vanished, and was replaced by a zest for life and work, faith in the future. Somehow the jail had become agreeable. After all, if you stood under the window and craned your neck a little, you could see a segment of blue sky above, and freedom, freedom. This here, Frank, Papritz, the superintendent, Sponner, Schmied, the endless drab hours, the dirt, the stench, the cold,—*auch das geht vorüber*. (that also will pass away), as Ada Christen used to say, a contemporary of Neruda and the greatest poetess of German Austria,

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passed by and forgotten only because she led a somewhat free life. "Auch das geht vorüber."

Yes. But an hour later I felt the old hunger. The chill emptiness in the stomach as on the day before, the day before that, a week previously. And I called to mind a very experienced woman, the mother of four marriageable daughters, who often used to explain to young men that restaurant fare is not and never can be the same thing as meals at home, in the family: even though you eat better and more in a restaurant, an hour later you will be hungry. A wise woman — she had observed with accuracy.

I reflected how the body might be helped. What about a nap? After all, sleep is strengthening. I would try to sleep a few hours in the course of the day, for instance between three and four in the afternoon.

If a man is well fed, his humour is warm; with this chill emptiness in the stomach, the soul is also cold. A strict ruler, the stomach. But in certain respects one's comprehension becomes keener. I comprehended, for example, how a fly probably feels when it is caught in a spider's web. And the spider comes and ties and enmeshes it still closer.

XXI

One Sunday we suddenly took leave of Dušek. For a number of weeks he had been employed in the superintendent's room; he used to come to us for his evening meal and to spend the night, he now arrived with the sad news that he would be shifted into the Rossau barracks. In these barracks there was a branch establishment of our jail; whenever it had received so many supplies that it was full up, matters were looked into, and so and so many

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numbers were taken off to the barracks — either at night by foot-transport, or else during the day in green vehicles. There they transferred the individuals who had been sentenced to shorter terms of punishment amounting to a few months, or persons whose examination had reached a deadlock, and who could be quietly laid "upon ice". Like Voronin of old. There waited those whom nobody troubled about. So it seemed as if Dušek were right; they wanted to keep us there for the duration of the war, and all cross-examinations were an empty and useless farce. Klofáč was incarcerated in the tower, he had been incarcerated at Prague for years, — and not even the charge against him had been drawn up.

Dušek collected his things, he had equipment for the four seasons of the year, and we parted. For an indefinite period? For ever? Who could say? I was grateful to destiny, since it had to be, for having brought me into number 60 while he was there, and grateful to him for having initiated me into all the features of life and existence there. We were able to accompany him only to the door, he went to the green vehicle with defence-corps men. That was a sad afternoon following his departure, — there was silence in the room, everybody had been fond of him, and it was not until the evening that the tongues were loosened, as it were. The censorists expressed the opinion that he was "*ein sehr anständiger Mensch*" (a very decent man). Hedrich recalled his first meeting with him, Budi declared that such a man could not and must not be condemned, while Papa Declich remarked that he was now the only one who remained of them all as "*alte Diener*" (old servant). "*Alte Diener*" was his customary formula when he introduced himself.

Budi then took Dušek's place in the superintendent's office.

Prosperity ensconced itself in our room. Papritz permitted the censorists to get their food from a restaurant, and the censorists

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immediately managed to make use of this on behalf of Messrs. Wilder and Lamm ; Fels and Goldenstein each ordered two portions of lunch daily, which they passed on to their co-religionists in question, — Papritz would not give permission to Wilder and Lamm — why, nobody knew, and only the censorists knew why they obtained it. Further, the superintendent announced that he wanted to turn number 60 into an "Intelligenz-Zimmer", and immediately the artillery-man, the corporal motor-driver and several more 'Fallotti' had to shift into another cell ; Mr. Karl was appointed our orderly or servant, in consequence of which he immediately forfeited his "Mr." and now only answered to the name Karl. There were now but fifteen in the room, and all had the agreeable feeling such as people are accustomed to have, when they get rid of others, whether in a train, in a tram, in a coffee-house at a crowded table, or in jail. During exercise the engineer remarked that he would apply to the superintendent to be transferred to us, he applied, but apparently the superintendent answered with a sharp refusal, without assigning any reasons. Papa Declich, who had followed his action rather uneasily, was obviously pleased at the refusal, but he did not say a word. The censorists again exerted themselves on behalf of Dr. Jonas from number 64, — also in vain. This Dr. Jonas was perhaps the most nervous man in the whole jail. A handsome young lawyer from Cracow, who shortly before the war married a millionairess, he had got into the censorship during the war, and from the censorship here. Like the rest. He used to weep and despond for whole nights along. Mr. Fels several times brought him to me, so that I should help him as I had helped them. I attempted it, and at the morning exercise I pointed out to him how unwise it was to let his life be poisoned by jail ; at exercise in the afternoon he again came and looked at me with his despairing

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eyes, saying that he had no rest, that life had become loathsome to him and that he would rather beat his head against the wall until it burst. He said that all Cracow, in fact, all Galicia knew him, and were all now aware that he was in jail for deception and fraud, and God knew he was innocent. Perhaps if he had been put into our cell, the thing would not have happened which happened later...

The gloating of people who were rid of others did not last long. On the following day quite early we had a new arrival — another corporal. A short thick-set man, with a face of which Hedrich, when he had looked at it, remarked that it was one of those which a man would rather not see when he is by himself in a forest or upon a lonely road. The fellow looked around, noticed that all the people were of a better class (*Intelligenz-Zimmer!*), probably wanted to impress them, and began holding forth. He and a comrade had stolen the regimental cashbox, had carried it off somewhere, opened it and removed seventy-five thousand crowns. When it came out, they made a small fire, and it seemed that the worthy authorities actually discovered corners and edges of the burnt thousand-crown banknotes. And when doubts arose as to whether the whole quota had been burnt, our corporal suggested to them that they themselves should also burn seventy-five thousand-crown notes and weigh the ashes, — there would not be an ounce more than the ashes from what they had burnt in their fit of panic. And at this he laughed until his eyes filled with tears, the worthy authorities had by no means been prepared to make such a test. The censorists were enormously interested by this story, they asked about one thing after another, and the corporal told his tale in a very open and self-possessed manner. He would get at the most eight years for it, not more. The sentences for such thefts increased in a very moderate proportion; for five thousand he would get two years, for

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fifteen thousand three years, for thirty thousand, four years — so it increased gently, then it stopped and suddenly sank, until it entirely disappeared.

If he had had an opportunity to steal a million, he would have been walking undisturbed along the Ringstrasse, if two million, all the ministers would have been talking to him respectfully, if three million he might have expected some distinction, well, well, a spiteful tongue and an unpleasant man.

"It is for this knowledge apparently that they reckoned him among the intelligent prisoners" said Mr. Fels to me.

And in the following afternoon we received another new specimen. Budi arrived from the office and announced that this time it was really a 'patriot'. His name was Mlacker, but he was a Croat and was hard of hearing. He arrived, looked around at us and at the room, his face became radiant, and he began in a hoarse voice: "Gentlemen, what luck! What luck! For six days I was locked up in a police cell, in darkness, starving, saw nobody, didn't know whether it was night or day, here it is light again, and there are people, people. Gentlemen if I had won the first prize in a Turkish lottery, I could not be happier. Gentlemen, good gentlemen."

Budi spoke to Declich, Papa mumbled something, but went to his larder, took out bread, ham, butter, a box of sardines and a bottle of wine, put it on the table, and Budi invited our new member to eat. Mr. Mlacker began to eat — a concert for the eyes, everybody looked on. He ate, smacked his lips, licked his fingers, returned thanks, — the whole of number 60 was moved. And Budi introduced himself to him in Croatian. — Mr. Mlacker laid down his knife, rolled his eyes, opened his mouth and then shouted: "Perhaps from the family of Budi in Agram"?

"That is my uncle."

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"Dear Budi, dear Budi! What a fine place the world is! What luck!" And overflowing, so to speak, with sweetness, he turned to his food again, gazing with enraptured eyes at our volunteer.

"Did you hear, he called me dear Budi" whispered Budi to me with satisfaction.

"What have the authorities against him?"

"He kept out of the way when he was called up. He was in America, — but I will ask him."

"Dear Budi" lisped Mr. Mlacker afresh, when he had disposed of everything which had been put on the table for him.

Budi sat down with him, and they started talking.

"A very decent man" he reported to me afterwards, "he knows all our family. As I said, he did not appear when he was called up, but a mistake has been made, — he is not to blame for it."

In the evening Budi invited Mr. Mlacker to our table. Mr. Mlacker ate excellently, and again extolled the beauty of the world, the agreeable sojourn there, the kind people and Budi.

"Dear Budi."

Papa Declich did not utter a word, he only watched our guest and scowled. From time to time Hedrich recalled Dušek. After supper Budi offered cigarettes to Mr. Mlacker. — Mr. Mlacker took them, smoked them and extolled afresh.

On the next day our warden Schmied gave me and Hedrich a cutting to read from the evening edition of the previous day's "Tagblatt". The heading was: "After fifteen years". It said that a week previously the police had arrested and on that day had taken to the military prison Janko Mlacker, an accountant who fifteen years before had absconded to America with 45.000 crowns which he had embezzled. There he had squandered the money, had returned, had knocked about in Austria and Hungary under assum-

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ed names, and finally had been run to earth. As it was ascertained that he had also evaded his military service, he would be brought before the military court.

It was Hedrich who conveyed this piece of news into the room. It was whispered about, the embezzler was stared at, Papa Declich who had probably formed a corroboration of his forebodings from Hedrich's narrative, snarled a contemptuous "Fallot", and the poor deaf Mlacker began to look at everybody with the gaze of a hound-ed animal.

Budi did not show himself in the room the whole day. In the evening he arrived in low spirits, complained of headache, did not eat, did not speak, went to bed early, and the next morning told me that this man must be cleared out of the room.

And actually, both of them, the corporal and Mr. Mlacker, were shifted. On to the first floor. The corporal was cheerful, Mr. Mlacker quite furious. He told Hedrich that he knew who had got him out of the room, and let that gentleman beware.

Budi came into supper in good spirits, but when Hedrich informed him of this, he turned pale and was silent.

"Have you been talking a bit freely to him?" I asked.

"Well yes, we did talk about one thing and another" he remarked rather crestfallen.

"The cell is clean again. Karl, give me another bottle of wine" ordered Mr. Fels. The cell is clean again, — yes, but for how long?

However, these episodes began to interest me. A man came in, displayed his soul as he would like us to see it, but we at once knew how to look at it so as to see what it was like in reality, and he departed. I followed this spectacle, and read my Molière at the same time — one play daily.

THE JAIL

XXII

What the superintendent's idea was of an "Intelligenz-Zimmer", — heaven alone knew. I watched the daily ebb and flow in our number 60, and could not help smiling. Or did he really want to give me an opportunity of becoming familiar with as many and varied human destinies as possible? He was a German from Mödling in Lower Austria, a well-to-do man. The war had taken him from his fields and vineyards, and turned him into a keeper of criminals and convicts. He assuredly was bored there and found his services irksome. He was an intelligent man; I used to speak a few words with him now and then. The ideas he expressed were not couched in common language, and one could not help surmising that he had read, observed and reflected. He was anxious to become acquainted with some of my work; he had heard that this or that had been translated, and asked whether I had it. I referred him to the time when I should leave that place as a free man, he waved his hand, as much as to say: Ah, I shall have to wait. Then he was very much interested as to how I should write my recollections of my sojourn there, what I should relate in them, who would be mentioned. I assured him that he would see himself too, and that the jail would be so thoroughly depicted and described that it would form a souvenir of the war for him also.

People entered the cell, not a day passed but one or two new faces appeared. In truth, the superintendent was turning number 60 into an observation-centre for me. They came, told their stories, and they were either put on one side and not troubled about any further, or they were watched until they again departed. They did not stay with us long; after two days, Sponner or Schmied would come and take them away into another room or to another floor.

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And it was as if the water had closed above their heads; nothing more was spoken or known about them, and if we met with them during exercise, they looked at us either as strangers or else angrily, — number 60 had obviously become a cell which could not be forgotten, and which was looked up to as a seat of the elect.

And so we were joined by a gentleman in a black suit, a white waistcoat and patent leather boots, — with a crooked nose and cunning eyes. As soon as he had entered the room and looked around, he announced loudly: "There are too many Jews here for me." Our native Hebrews burst out laughing, surrounded him and plied him with questions. A Magyar Jew. They had brought him direct from a sanatorium at Purkersdorf. He had been unwilling to take an active part in the war, especially so as regards life in the trenches, and he had devised a disease of the nerves, a method of treatment and had travelled from Hungary to Purkersdorf. There he had lived for several weeks in undisturbed happiness, no longer needed even hydropathy, until — heaven alone knows what official it occurred to — the gendarmes arrived one night at half past one, went from room to room, asked for certain papers, and the consequence was that twelve gentlemen had to get dressed and accompany the gendarmes to the station. The train did not go until the morning, so they waited till the morning and were now in Vienna. Some at the police headquarters, others here, he with us. He enquired after the prevailing customs and usages, and when he heard that it really was a prison and not a hotel, he began to prepare for action in coping with such a superintendent and giving him a piece of his mind. In Magyar, he said. In Hungary, he said, things were quite different. He had not got his papers with him, they would have to look for them in Budapest, but he would not remain where he was for another twenty-four hours. That he would warrant us.

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And when he was summoned for cross-examination, he departed like a torero into the arena. Victorious and self-assured. But when he returned half an hour later, he was downcast and silent. He opened his box, took off his black coat and slipped on a grey house-jacket, pulled off his patent leather boots and donned comfortable shoes.

Mr. Lamm watched him during this process with great interest, and when he had finished, he said to him benevolently: "It is a good thing if a man has an extra outfit with him, then he can at least make himself at home immediately."

Mr. Fels questioned me as to whether I had heard his avowed intentions towards the superintendent, and told me to have a look at this hero now, — that, he said, was the whole Magyar character for which Austria has such awesome respect, brag, nothing but brag. The present-day Magyars, he declared, were not those of the year 1848; every other one was somebody whose name had been different a short time previously; everything had become Jewish, and he, Fels, knew these Jews, — they are just as great braggarts as they are cowards, as soon as you show them your fist.

We lost the sergeant. He was not transferred anywhere, but he went whither we were all yearning to go — to freedom. He was summoned on the Saturday morning, whether to a cross-examination or to a trial, it was difficult to say; he did not tell us, and we did not discover from any other quarter. An hour later he came back beaming with joy; he was to be discharged that day. He went from one man to another, he assured each one that he would remember him to his dying hour, he declared to each one that he would not remain long there either, and would also be set at liberty; that his trifling offence would evaporate and vanish like those cigarettes of his. He bequeathed his wine to Karl, he had ordered five

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bottles of wine, and was to have received them in the afternoon. Karl, he said, should drink his health and have a little souvenir of him.

He departed in the afternoon, and it was as if somebody had swept and aired the room; it was cleaner and pleasanter. These Viennese anti-Semites are a peculiar people; they agree to every opinion and every utterance in a pleasant and affable manner, indeed, they themselves speak to a man according to what they think is his type; they adopt the attitude of realizing and understanding everything, and yet there are no greater dissemblers, sneaks and toadies than they are. Anybody who has that fortunate sixth sense for the emanation of character which proceeds from each man with whom they are speaking, is heartily sick of such a Viennese after a minute of his company, I was glad when the doors closed behind that man.

And they act meanly; when the caterer's weekly delivery was issued, Karl returned from the superintendent's office with empty hands and raged. "The low hound. He waited there until the caterer came, and took his wine off with him."

Papa Declich smiled: "Fallot". Whenever the talkative sergeant had addressed him, he had never answered him; he had not understood because he did not want to understand. The sergeant had taken it good-humouredly and excused him with a shrug of the shoulders and the nick-name "Katzelmacher", — this being what the Viennese call the Italians.

Karl was furious throughout that Sunday; he said that the sergeant had received four weeks imprisonment for those cigarettes, and the four weeks had been deducted from his two months under arrest. That was why he had been discharged, and he was a "Gauner",*

*Rascal.

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who had spread the worst reports about each of us in number 60 etc.

It was possible, who could tell? On the Monday nothing more was said about him.

And again a new man entered. A corporal of the defence-corps, with two medals on his breast. For murdering his wife, it was said. Absurd. A wretch like that, he declared, you can at the most thrash or beat black and blue, but kill her? He had been fond of her, the beast, he had married her two months before the war, had joined the army, had written to her. Sweetheart, dear wife, when a man is in the trenches and the bullets are whistling and buzzing over his head, he thinks differently of the woman he likes than in civil life. He wrote whenever he had the chance, death raged around him, but he wrote. And today he would box her ears for every word which he had sent her, for every sigh when he had thought of her. The bitch, the bitch! Now and then she let him know that she could not write,—there was the farm, the vineyard, always something or other. Suddenly he received a letter, looked at it,—no signature. When the master of the house, it said, does not look after the farm, another must see to it, and when a bed is made for two, one alone cannot lie in it. And more such allusions . . . He went to his captain, told him what had been sent him, and asked for leave. He had obtained none since the beginning of the war, he had performed his duties efficiently,—he was granted leave instantly. And the captain urged him not to let himself be carried away by anger, and not to commit any folly. He travelled day and night.. And it was night when he arrived. He knocked, beat at the window,—for a long time there was no answer. At last she opened the peep-hole and asked who was there. It was he, she was to come down and open the door. A while passed, a considerable while, before he got into the room. She was much taken aback and, as it

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seemed, very drowsy. You're glad, eh? he burst forth. But you're sleepy, tomorrow will do. He undressed. She looked at him askance like a thief. He lay down, she put out the light and lay down beside him. All without a word. She waited awhile, then she began and wanted to make love. He pushed her aside and turned away. He was hungering for her, but everything within him wept with doleful rage. And he was so tired out that he fell asleep. Scarcely had morning broke than he got up. She pretended to be asleep, but he could see quite well that her eyelids were trembling, and that she was watching him. He dressed. And now get up.

She crept out of bed, then he went for her with a strap. And struck and struck, and thrashed and thrashed. Without asking any questions, and without saying a word. She did not scream, she only sobbed and tried to parry his blows with her hands. Well, he did not strike her face, it was just that face with the blue eyes that he had always been so fond of. And he struck and struck, until her body under her chemise was red and striped like a Scottish plaid. Then he opened the door of the room and the door of the house; clear out. She fled as she was, in her chemise. Day came. He cooked his breakfast, drank coffee, and his tears fell into it.

Then he went to look in the stables, at the garden, the vineyard,—on the other side of the fence he saw the neighbours, who looked at him inquisitively and talked for talking's sake about the war and what it was like at the front. "But at noon the gendarme came, wanted to know where my wife was. I said I did not know, in the morning I had thrown her out of the house and she had not said where she was going. When had I arrived? In the night, I said. He asked for my papers. Good, the papers were there. He looked at them, the stamp was on my travelling warrant, everything was in order. He said he would have a look round the farm. Good, I went

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with him, he inspected the stables, the garden, the vineyard to see if there were any signs of recent digging. Then he examined the room and again asked about her. I told him how I had arrived and what had happened to her that morning He had a look, asked a few questions, what else could I tell him? He went away, said that a search must be made. Let them search, they are sure to find her, a creature of that sort would never do anything desperate. They searched on Sunday, on Monday,—nowhere a trace of her. We have an arched-in gulley, they dug up the arch to a distance of thirty yards—again nothing. They arrested me, I was to go to Vienna. Good, Vienna. But I shan't stand my trial, she's bound to turn up. And then, to the front, to the front. The devil has taken everything I have, what is left? To destroy people, just as I have been destroyed myself. The farm, the garden, the vineyard will never see me again. I don't care about them, I don't care about anything. I am a born soldier, and if I had not got mixed up with farming, I should not have had this experience. You know, gentlemen, what you read about the soldier in old histories. Wherever he comes, everything is his—rooms, food, drink, women. But not a wife. No, not a wife. All of them,—yes. In Poland we came to a castle, some prince or other, the devil alone knows, Polakincki, there was only a steward in the castle. The Prince, he said, what do we care about your Prince, bring us food, bring us drink. We ate, we drank. And then we made black coffee. Ourselves,—why call that slave again? There was plenty of wood, the whole room was lined halfway up with shiny carved wood, we pulled it down and made our black coffee. We made it all night—"

At this the warder called him for cross-examination.

"You will see, gentlemen, that wretch of a woman has been found, and I shall say goodbye to you."

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We waited. Nobody spoke.

A quarter of an hour later he was back again.

"They found her. Do you know where they found her? She was at her father's, the old rogue knew about it all and helped her in everything. A telegram is there. The superintendent asked me whether I wanted to spend the rest of my leave at home. I said no, I wanted to go back to the front immediately. He praised me for that. Well, I'm going on with my soldiering, food, drink, the trenches with the music of the bullets, Goodbye, gentlemen."

And he was already outside. He had blown in like the wind, he had turned round like the wind, and like the wind he was off again.

"I think he's still fond of her," remarked Mr. Fels.

Hedrich sat there with wide-opened eyes. "A man oughtn't to marry, no, he oughtn't" he remarked.

And I thought of this primitive corporal, and above his story I saw a countenance arise with a livid, terror-stricken gaze, the countenance of the female-animal. As a girl she had grown up to get married, and when she had married, the meaning of her life had departed to the war. Assuredly she had waited, had defied her young blood, until . . . How many such tiny destinies were wedged in amid this great war, how many lives was it trampling upon and crushing, directly or indirectly?

I wanted to busy myself with Molière, but at the second page I noticed that my mind was not taking in what I was reading with my eyes. I put it aside.

XXIII.

Molière is not a hard and unrelenting judge like Shakespeare. He only holds a mirror up to his age, watches it regarding itself

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there, smiles when he sees it frowning and bursts into loud laughter whenever it indulges in a fit of offended wrath. The principle of its life is to enjoy life. To enjoy it as much, as widely, as long as possible. That is why not even old age is to be a hindrance to enjoyment. It wears no beard in which time would so gladly weave its white autumn threads, and in order to escape time's revenge on its tresses, it powders them or replaces them by a wig. Old age forced this fashion upon youth as well, so as to be able to have equal rights with it and to keep pace with it. Besides this, old age makes use of money; old age possesses it, possesses also titles, houses and castles,—everything only for the purpose of being able to enjoy. But the voice of nature does not let itself be silenced; wherever youth is, it is drawn towards the wit of youth, even though it be needy, in debt and without titles. And hoodwinked old age fumes and threatens, but finally submits to the exigencies of the situation; then it assuredly would at once turn aside and search for somewhere else to be able to enjoy itself with better success. And that is life, that is the world. A kingly majesty reigns supreme over it all like a distant, inaccessible sun; only now and then does its ray fall like a *deus ex machina*, in order to shed warmth upon the numbness of some situation.

In this locality Molière produced a somewhat grotesque effect upon me,—he ought to be read somewhere in a park under the light of noon, in a park where there are artificial ponds and fountains, where statues glimmer in the green dusk, and the stone benches are only just big enough for two people to sit upon.

When I have finished reading this, I shall send for Shakespeare, the revealer of human souls, the stern judge of judges and kings, the creator and destroyer, the poet of poets. I used to think once that if I were cast away like Robinson Crusoe on a desert island

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and could or might choose only a single book as my companion, that it would be Shakespeare. Well, he shall follow me here.

Warder Sponner confided a secret to me; that day a new fellow-countryman was to come into our cell, a doctor, he said, and a bank manager —

Name?

He did not know. A short name, something like —

Dr. Preiss?

Yes, yes.

Then he was there too. I was glad that he was coming to us. I reflected that the superintendent would have to provide one more bed. And I would initiate our dear manager into the prevailing usages, as Dušek had previously done for me. Papa Declich would have one boarder more. So I waited —

Meanwhile, towards noon Papa Declich mounted on to the straw mattresses, his observation post, and called me.

In the large courtyard, he said, two strange people were exercising. Lo and behold, — Dr. Preiss. And the second one the censorists recognized as their Professor Braun, who had been put there for the same business as they were. They were walking together, with their overcoats thrown across their shoulders, and had obviously become acquainted. I beckoned to Preiss,—he smiled.

I jumped down and lay in wait by the door for Sponner's footstep. What was the matter? Dr. Preiss was there, but where had they put him?

At the last moment, it appeared, orders had been given to put him into the tower.

I was summoned to the Tigergasse. Two defence-corps men again went with me. I felt how in the air and sunshine my head was turning and reeling, as it were, and how my step was uncertain.

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Dr. Frank informed me in his correct and precise manner that I had a visitor. On the floor lay bundles of papers, boxes, travelling bags—I pointed to them with my foot and said:

"Ah, Dr. Preiss?"

"Yes we have brought him from Prague," said Frank with a cold smile.

My visitors entered. Three officials from the Bodenkreditanstalt. They brought me flowers. I declined them and pointed out that I was only allowed to smell at them.

Dr. Frank corroborated this with a nod of the head.

All three,—Viennese,—broke out in dialect. When the Viennese speaks slowly, he speaks literary German; as soon as he lets his tongue go like an express train, he talks Viennese.

So, what was I doing there? There was so much work in the office, I was wanted everywhere, they said; they couldn't manage by themselves, everything there was in such confusion, nobody knew what to do —

Dr. Frank smiled. I mentioned solemnly that I had fifteen unoccupied hours daily, and that I could place them at their disposal.

They turned to Frank. How much longer would that last, and was there any sense at all in my imprisonment; they would wager their heads, they declared, that I had done nothing.

I stood up and drew their attention to the fact that we must not detain the worthy authority, that he too had a great deal of work, and that I could not place any of my free time at his disposal either.

Whereupon the defence-corps men led me back again.

During the afternoon exercise I now used to go with Zamazal. The trial of Dr. Kramář and associates had come up again, and they sent Zamazal to the small courtyard so that he could refresh

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himself after his daily sessions in the dock. And Zamazal was standing and waiting for me. He was emaciated, sallow, unwell. He uttered a sentence, and anybody could see what sort of man this "traitor" was. He related about the course of the trial. The reading of the indictment, the speeches of Kramář and Rašín, the defence by Körner. He said that he also was composing a speech which he wanted to deliver. I begged him for God's sake not to do it.

Our dear Hedrich was at last brought up for trial. He was taken to the Rossau barracks before the brigade court. He soon returned sad and overwhelmed. For those few spoons from Belgrade he had received three weeks close arrest, but he was not overwhelmed by the three weeks, but because he had to leave us. From the six months which he had served here they had deducted his sentence, and found that he had been imprisoned longer than was necessary, and that he must now return to his regimental unit somewhere in Russian Poland. He walked about the room with bowed head, closed eyes, and even his little cigar was hanging with the end towards the floor. He was reflecting and considering what he should do so as not to have to leave number 60. He was advised one thing and another, even "fallotish" things, and the good lad already decided that he "would perpetrate "something".

I took him on one side and dissuaded him from everything. I reminded him of his future life, and the results that any such folly would have on it. Then I called his advisors to us, and in his presence I reproached them for wanting to spoil his future.

Suddenly a fresh idea occurred to him. He would go to the lieutenant-colonel and ask him to keep him here. He said that he had once dressed his wife's and daughter's hair, and the old gentlemen used to come every day to look at this work, and had spoken to him in a very benevolent manner.

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He got before the colonel and made his request, but the old gentleman snapped at him, and asked him whether he was mad,

Meanwhile we had a collection made. Each one assigned a few crowns for his benefit from the amount deposited with the staff superintendent in the main office; altogether it came to about eight hundred. And with this dowry Hedrich left the jail. He collected his things into a military knapsack, put it on his back, shook hands with us, and wept and departed.

And rarely in my life have I said goodbye to a man with such regret and, at the same time, with such good wishes, as to this simple and unspoiled barber's assistant.

The engineer made another attempt to get in with us. He was again denied.

During exercise he told me that the lieutenant-colonel had said he would have the chains taken from his feet, if he would come and ask for it. The engineer answered that he had not asked for them to be given him, and that he would not plead for them to be taken away.

The style of this answer reminded me a little of a similar remark I had made to Frank,— perhaps that was why I took to him. I gave him all the cigars I had in my pocket.

XXIV.

I was again in the Street of the Tigers. When they took me there, I went with a certain amount of alarm. For a few days previously I had received a visitor who had caused me considerable agitation. It was the wife of a friend of mine, a journalist who was then in the army. After many entreaties, Frank had granted her the usual

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ten minutes; they led me in, and when she caught sight of me, she burst into tears and could not utter a single word—she did nothing but cry. In number 60 there was no mirror, but I felt my ailing appearance and the decrease in all my bodily strength. In front of Frank, however, I had not shown any signs of this, and all my visitors hitherto, as if guessing my wishes, had not alluded to my health either by remark or question,—until this lady had revealed her tears at my wretched condition in front of the German. With his cold eyes he looked at her and at me; this glance scalded my soul, I felt shame for her unaffected tears, and I would have given a year of my life to have prevented them. My body was weak and ailing, but my spirit was so strong, that I knew, even if they had led me to the gallows, I should have gone with upraised head and should have whistled a defiant song; and lo and behold, now a visitor came, of Czech race, and was weeping in front of this German. Hitherto I had not heard a human word from him; he had always been stiff and cold as the letter of the law; in the correspondence which were sent me he expunged all the names, greetings from acquaintances, news of weddings and deaths, and if during our conversations he diverged by a question or a remark from the official path, I had the feeling that he was laying a trap for me, that he was seeking something which I was hiding from him, and wanted to be assured that it was something which in reality it was not. For me he was an immediate representative of the system current in the years 1915 and 1916, which recognised no accused, but only culprits, for which one's nationality was enough to rouse suspicion, and three words written or uttered sufficed to draw up a charge of a serious crime. And it was in front of this automaton of the law that my visitor was weeping. I made some joke or other, asked after her husband and children, spoke about the weather, but I

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could not stop her crying, and so after a few minutes I announced that I was going home.

And that was why I arrived this day with alarm; my health was getting worse from day to day. Kranz, the burglar of goldsmith's shops, the good Kranz, brought me lemons, rum, flasks of cognac daily, and Papa Declich, my only doctor, prepared remedies and medicines for me from them. Mr. Fels remarked that he was concerned on my account by the cold here. Sergeant Kretzer wanted to report on his own account that I was sick, and Warder Sponner advised me to wrap myself up in the blankets and to lie down all day, this being, he said, the best remedy against fever.

In a word, I shrank from showing myself to any new visitor.

This day, however, it was not a visitor. A cross-examination. A cross-examination into the merits of my case, which Frank had promised me on the day of my arrest. That is, seven weeks previously.

Frank, clean-shaven, took my file out of a table-drawer,—this precious file of mine had become quite fat. He handed me my book "Drops", and asked me whether I knew that the "Temps" and the "Times" had published articles on my imprisonment.

How could I know it,—I was hermetically closed up.

He smiled, strips of gold flashed in his teeth, but he did not begin. He was clearly waiting for somebody.

This somebody now entered. A cadet sergeant-major, the interpreter.

He gave me his hand, which surprised me somewhat—Frank had never done so.

We began. I translated the first poem, Frank held a German translation in his hand, nodded, and where my translation deviated from his translation, the interpreter gave his decision. The trans-

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lation deviated often, in places Frank had the precise opposite of what I had written in my verses.

This was my first crime—a poem “In memory of November 5th, 1905.” When I had completed the translation, I explained how the poem had arisen. At the time when negotiations were proceeding to codify the universal suffrage law, there had been big workmen’s demonstrations in Vienna and Prague. Thousands and thousands of people had marched through the streets, nowhere had there been any disturbances, the police were superfluous, the proletariat had displayed their disciplined strength and with it the justice of their demand. They had not threatened, they had kept silent, but it was a silence which was eloquent. And the deductions I had drawn from this as regards the success of my nation’s desires, I had expressed in that poem.

A few more questions, then the report. Frank paraphrased my remarks and deductions very nicely; if I wanted to supplement anything, he paraphrased everything readily in accordance with my wishes.

Can there really be a human being inside this letter of the law? I thought to myself in astonishment.

We proceeded to the second crime, the poem “Hospital Humanitarianism”. Again the translation first, then the commentary. As the somewhat trivial treatment of the verses attests, it is the monologue of a poor wretch who has just been discharged from a hospital. I heard the contents in a tram, where that man was formulating his view of the world. As long as you are well, nobody troubles about you, whether you are starving, freezing—it’s all the same. They want taxes from you, they take you into the army, give this and they care nothing else about you. But if you fall ill, what a fuss! You have a bed, attendance, plenty of food, suddenly you are

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somebody whom everybody looks after as if it mattered how you die.

Frank again collected my observations for the report and concluded: "The poem is not an accusation against the State, but against human society," and with his cold eyes he looked inquiringly to see whether I agreed.

Perhaps after all I had been unjust to him; perhaps he is only—

Third crime: To Dr. Frant. Mesany:

Were I king, I would reward you
With a wealth of honour's garlands;
With Mauritius, Theobaldus,
Then a missive in my writing
Would append a barony
To your name —

I translated, — this time there was not a single divergency in Frank's translation. But the commentary and the reason why I wrote the poem were entirely new to him. In February 1913 Dr. Mesany had operated on me, and with unexampled care and devotion had nursed me back to complete health by the end of April. When my interrupted literary activity was renewed, it could begin in no other way than by this expression of thanks to the man who had saved my life. His position in society was at that time extremely unpleasant. He and the woman he loved were living together without the sanction of the Church, and respectable persons of both sexes were highly indignant thereat; the Post Office made a point of returning letters addressed to his wife, if they bore his surname; in fact, public opinion in a provincial town had found its victim, which it condemned severely and mercilessly, as only such a tribunal can do. My friend suffered immoderately in consequence, and I knew all about it. And here was an opportunity to tell him how time-serving was the

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judgment of such moralists; if I had been king, and had given him baronies and orders, they would have bowed and scraped before him, he would have been an ornament to society, a celebrity, a man "of high renown", "one of our own" etc.

"But don't these lines ridicule the orders a little?" asked Frank.

"I would ridicule only my own orders, but otherwise there is no ridicule in them. The proof is that in the first draft of this poem which was printed in the "Beseda Času", the third line ran:

Golden fleece and Leopold—

But when I arranged the poem for the book, I changed this verse to its present form, precisely in order to avoid even the shadow of such a suspicion, although even in its first form it contains no ridicule, and I had no intention of investing this poem with it".

By chance the cadet-interpreter knew Pardubice, and corroborated the accuracy of my statements.

And Frank again dictated, — a man, truly a man. But it occurred to me that we should wait till the end. That this was the only thing they had against me, that they had imprisoned and detained me only for this, — it was impossible. But I would see what was coming.

Fourth crime: "Twenty Years Later". Verses dedicated to the memory of the Omladina.

I translated them. Frank corrected his translation which had been prepared by God knows whom, and then we discussed what the Omladina really was. Frank thought that it consisted of young men who smeared over the eagles on pillar-boxes; my view was, the young literary and political generation which had promised much, had fulfilled something, had failed in other things, but which had not yet spoken its last word. Frank mentioned the names of Mrva, Dragoun, I those of Dr. Rašín, the Hajns, F. V. Krejčí, Dr. Preiss, Soukup, Groš. Frank supposed it was a secret society which had

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been formed in the year 1893; I, that it was a mighty wave which in that year had surged upon us Czechs, — in a word, each of us told what he knew.

And Frank paraphrased for the report what I had known and told.

We were ready. Frank read the report to me.

"Correct?" he asked, when he had finished.

"Yes. But tell me, did you find nothing else in my literary activity for which you could have imprisoned and tried me? I have written heaps of other things which might be more important to you and more serious to me—"

He looked at me with his cold eyes, and showed the golden strips in his teeth as he smiled quietly: "No, this is the only thing which has come to our knowledge".

I signed the report.

Frank handed me over to the defence-corps men, and the defence-corps men took me home. The streets, their bustle, the houses, the flowers in the windows, the shop-fronts, the placards, the golden radiance of the sun in the air, — all these things were already quite strange to me, quite strange.

In number 60 our "Galicians" were standing in the middle of the room, and Mr. Wilder was describing to them the courses of some banquet or other; Papa Declich was sitting on my bed (this was how he kept guard over it whenever I went away, so that nobody else should lie down there), and for motives of economy was carefully splitting matches in half; Papa Declich never smoked a cigar as a cigar, but hacked it into small pieces, and then smoked it in the form of cigarettes, — a modest and frugal man, as far as his own wants were concerned, but open-handed and liberal towards

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us, his friends. He greeted me, as he shook my hand, with a silent smile.

"A cross-examination, Papa Declich, that's all. And now there will be a very long silence, a lifelong annuity, as in your case".

My strength was exhausted, I sank down on the bed.

XXV.

A few carts were proceeding slowly through the "Long Mile".

The "Long Mile", is a high-road leading from the foot of the White Mountain to Knězeves. A broad white line, without a bend, and so long that it seems to reach somewhere to the end of the world. It is bordered with poplars. From my childhood I have loved high-roads, those arteries of our country-side, and this "Long Mile" has always been especially dear to me.

But here I remembered it it a curious kind of way. A number of carts were passing along it, covered with a grey awning; the horses were proceeding at a walking pace, and perhaps slept as they went; the drivers, with their extinguished pipes between their teeth, were dreaming to the sluggish creaking of the wheels, a grey dust covered them, covered the horses, covered the carts, the goal of their journey is somewhere in the boundless distance, — and so they move on from poplar to poplar, softly, monotonously, — at the most, a driver, through force of habit, mutters his drowsy: "hia".

I thought of that high-road, of those grey carts, and I compared them with our days in number 60. They pass on drowsily and sluggishly, — whither? Somewhere or other. When will they arrive? God knows. The way is unending.

Every day I did my few miles, otherwise I lay down. Shivering

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fits alternated with fever. Kranz slipped in several times each day, sat down on my bed, brought cognac, rum, sometimes a glass of hot tea, precious cigarettes, and always a new tale from his life. He related the story of how he had burgled the goldsmith's shop, and then did not know what to do with the watches, rings and chains; — he was not a fop to rig himself out with such valuables, nor did he have time to wind up some ninety watches daily; so he sold everything and then sat down in a café, and read in the paper that the police were looking for the burglar. He related how he had once left jail, proceeded to the wife of one of his fellow-prisoners, introduced himself to her as a locksmith who did jobs in the Grey House, and suggested that she should send ham, wine, a hundred crowns in small change, and a cycling suit to her husband; he obtained the lot, went into the Prater, transformed himself into a respectable man, ate and drank, and was so honest about it that he drank to the health of that good woman and her husband who was in prison. He related how he, with several companions, had procured military uniforms, he a sergeant-major's, had put on war decorations, and at night had masqueraded as military police in the streets of Vienna. They had pounced on volunteers and N.C.O's, had taken them off to the nearest commissariat, to be kept and watched there until they came for them. And how once, — that was a black Friday for Kranz, — they had planned to catch someone with a golden tassel; "I was loaded like a cannon, it was the devil who got me into mischief, — and so we stopped one of them just as he was coming out of a café in Mariahilferstrasse, but he wasn't one of the reserves, as we had expected, but one of these smart regulars, and no sooner had we asked him for his papers, than he began to swear and carry on, and within five minutes we were all at the commissariat; and that was my last performance as a free

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man, from there I came here. If a man is free, he shouldn't soak his senses in alcohol".

It was difficult to judge whether he was speaking the truth or whether he was making it up, but he was able to describe everything so vividly that it was poetical truth. I was fond of listening to him because he took my mind from where I was by making it a witness of his adventures, — and the greatest happiness in that place was to be somewhere else and to forget that we were there.

Papa Declich also used to sit with us and listen, — it was hard to say how much he understood, but one day he came out with the following paradox: Kranz, he said, was one of the best people he knew, and certainly the most honourable man here in the jail.

And new people came and went. They arrived like actors on the stage, said their parts and disappeared in the wings.

Volunteer Rosenstein. A subtle little fellow, a typical specimen of his race. Fidgety, nervous, timid. He displayed his right hand which had been shot through, — by a Russian bullet, he said. Tears trembled in his voice, the horror of war shuddered through his words, — the authorities declared that it was not a Russian bullet, but a bullet from his own rifle with which he had committed the crime of self-mutilation.

Dr. Povich-Rosetti. A tall, powerful Italian from Dalmatia. A sort of super-man. A dramatist, it was said, whose plays had been performed at several theatres. The story was that he had acted as a doctor in military hospital hutments, had been suddenly arrested and brought here. He did not know why, — indeed, his wife was the daughter of an Austrian major-general. He went off in triumph to be cross-examined, and returned extremely abashed. "They know everything there, they know that I invented a new rifle, and offered my invention to the Entente States. And that I have been in touch

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with Italy. And that I have obtained a divorce from my wife, the General's daughter. And they are acquainted with my literary work, and asked me what tendencies I followed in it. They know everything".

Mr. Fels then sat down with me and gave it as his view that there must be much more against the doctor than this "everything". A man with two names and at least three pasts. On the other hand, the credulous Budi was enchanted by his Dalmatian fellow-countryman, and called upon Papa Declich to produce his provisions and entertain the "patriot". Papa Declich gave a black look, but nevertheless he laid the table. And the patriot stated eating, — what an appetite. He ate and ate. Our suppers disappeared as if he were throwing them into a pit, and when the orderlies a little later brought in the dinner, the doctor was the only one who disposed of several portions of the second or third new edition of the beans with the stinking fish (he then filled his plate up again, for the afternoon, so he said), belched contentedly, drank up half a litre of water, and announced that "the food here is quite good". The whole of number 60 watched his exploits in some terror and with a little repugnance, — the super-man had become an under-man, and Papa Declich classified him as a "Fallot". Budi certainly protested, but Papa Declich led him into a corner, explained his views to him in a long, excited whisper of Italian, whereupon Budi departed to the office.

One night, — it was about two o'clock, — there was a rattle of keys, the door opened, and in came a lean, elderly defence-corps soldier.

"Lie down there somewhere" the warder commanded him, and departed.

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The defence-corps man laid a small bundle on the table, and looked around him.

"What have you been up to?" Sergeant Kretzer asked him from his straw mattress.

"Nix dajtch" replied the soldier bashfully. "Me bemisch".

"Why have they locked you up?" said Karl mustering his small supply of Czech.

"I have murdered my wife and mother-in-law" sighed the defence-corps man.

"As far as the mother-in-law goes, he'll get off scot-free" remarked Mr. Fels in German.

Number 60 burst out laughing. A feeble jest, — but after midnight in this grey and monotonous jail existence, it nevertheless kindled a flame and flashed up.

"And how was that?" enquired Karl further.

"I came home on leave and saw that while I was away she had been carrying on with somebody else" he began in a slow and tedious manner. "I said to her: Wife, stop that, you'll bring disgrace on yourself and me too. But she said to me: Why, you fool, are you going to believe what the people say? And her mother, or, if you like, my mother-in-law, went for me too: Son-in-law, you're like a little child; anybody can fool you with a story, and you believe it. My Liza is respectable. When they talked like that, I said no more. That was in the morning. And towards evening, Liza ran off; I sat and waited for an hour, for two hours, — Liza didn't come back. So I said to her mother-in-law: Where's the woman got to? Where should she be? She's gone out. And then she went for me and said that I'd like to tie her up by her leg to the table. I said I didn't want to tie her up, but that I thought when a man came home on leave after eighteen months at the front, his wife

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might stay with him a bit. And my mother-in-law again started nagging. Then my wife came in, we had supper, — she was quite excited, and absent-minded as if her thoughts were somewhere else. I didn't want to make a row, and so I asked no questions, but when she ran off again next day and came back so late, I said that she could and should stay at home for the short while I was there, and go gadding about when I went away. Then she burst out crying. It was an angry crying, and she had no excuse, but kept pitying herself and abusing me. I begrudged her the least thing, she said, and wanted to keep her cooped up at home, and army life had turned me into a wild animal, and I was like a tyrant, — and my mother-in-law had her say too. So I again said nothing. But when it went on like that for two weeks, — and I hadn't been allowed to touch her the whole time, — you know, gentlemen, that was more than I could stand. My leave was up and I saw that I was only in the way at home. She had somebody else, she went with somebody else,—she gave somebody else what she refused me, — a fine sort of husband I was! And so the last evening when she came back from her gadding about, I took the poker and gave her one on the forehead, until the blood came out like water from a pump. And when my mother-in-law began to go for me, I gave her one too with the poker. There they lay side by side, the blood kept on flowing, and I went to the police and gave myself up".

"When was that?" asked Karl yawning.

"A week ago. They took me, sent me here and there, always kept me locked up, — here I'm to be tried, they said".

The room was quiet. The defence-corps man looked around him, took off his clothes, put his bundle between two straw mattresses, and then lay down. I heard him sighing for a while, then he began to breathe with the regularity of a man who is sleeping peacefully.

XXVI.

Sunday afternoon.

At one o'clock there had been the roll-call which shut off number 60 from contact with the world, but did not shut off the life in it. That day there was none of the usual drably bitter and sluggish feeling caused by the lingering hours on Sunday afternoons,— on the contrary, the room began to be filled with bustle and tumult, as if a great moving job were about to take place. Tables, benches and straw mattresses were shifted about, dust arose, noisy discussions took place, whereupon the room afforded the following spectacle: In the centre both tables stood together at an obtuse angle, behind them lay the straw mattresses arranged as seats, flanked sideways with benches; on the seats presided Mr. Fels in the place of honour as chairman of the day's proceedings; his adjuncts consisted of all honourable inmates of number 60, as far as other functions had not been assigned to them, such as Karl, who, equipped with the piece of a broom-handle, was a defence-corps man and court guard; further Mr. Simon Lamm, who was the accused and, in the meanwhile, was skulking in our telephone box; Mr. Kretzer, who was his defending counsel, and myself, who was supreme provost-marshall, and representative of the monarchy's infringed interests. Of the witnesses summoned, three were present, — Papa Declich, Dr. Povich-Rosetti and Mr. Aaron Wilder, hotel-keeper from Cracow; those who had not appeared were Mr. Janko Mlacker, the artillery-man who had got into trouble about the boots, and finally, the king of Magyar pickpockets.

The supreme provost-marshall called upon the chairman of the court to have the accused brought forward.

The chairman issued the order.

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Karl brought in Mr. Simon Lamm; the accused had his straw hat on his head.

The supreme provost marshal called upon the chairman of the court to request the accused to remove his hat.

Chairman: "Prisoner in the dock, remove your hat".

The accused removed his hat, but asked to be allowed to state that his head was quite bald, and as all the windows were open, he was afraid that owing to the draught, his head might succumb to its usual pains, and he therefore pleaded to be allowed to put his hat on again.

The military prosecutor announced: "The windows are open, and they will remain so throughout the whole of the proceedings as a proof that a court-martial in Austria does not shrink from publicity; I call upon the chairman to draw the attention of the accused to the fact that he is not permitted to waste the precious time of the court with quibbles and clumsy attempts at speeches, for every squandered minute is a direct infringement of the interests of the Empire".

Chairman: "I draw your attention to these matters".

The supreme provost-marshall: "Further I call upon the chairman to order the accused to sit down in the dock".

Chairman: "Sit down".

Mr. Lamm sat down, the defence-corps man stood behind him, at the other end of the dock sat his defending counsel. Mr. Lamm sighed: "I've been in plenty of law courts in my time, but nowhere have I been treated like this."

The supreme provost-marshall: "I call upon the chairman to explain to the accused that civil courts have not the least idea of trying cases. Civil courts pamper everybody, and the scales of civil justice are not at all sensitive. We see the consequences in this war; before the very eyes of the civil courts the weeds of evil-doing have grown so rankly

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that they have nearly stifled all honesty of character; in fact, the feeling for what is virtue and what is crime has vanished entirely. The civil courts had to be removed, and the military courts had to be introduced for the purpose of rooting out the weeds, replacing the old scales of justice by new ones, and infusing life into the deteriorated conceptions of right and wrong. Further, I call upon the chairman to draw the attention of the accused man Lamm to the fact that he is not to talk unnecessarily nor to interrupt the proceedings."

The Chairman: "I point out to you, Lamm, that you are not to talk unnecessarily."

The accused: "Lamm? Mr. Lamm, gentlemen."

The supreme provost-marshall: "I call upon the chairman to intimate to the accused that he is before a high military court, and that the appellation of gentleman is here inadmissible. Further, that he should particularly draw the attention of the accused to the fact that by impertinent remarks he will only make worse his situation which is bad enough as it is. Finally, he is to begin the proceedings by ascertaining the name, residence and age of the accused."

Chairman: "Prisoner in the dock, I hereby intimate all that to you, so take heed that you, hm, hm, — but you know what I mean, and what is your name?"

Accused: "You've had me already nine months here under arrest, and you don't know."

Members of the court: "Impudence!" "Audacity!" "An affront to the court!"

The supreme provost-marshall: "Members of the court, let me point out that this impertinence has a deeper cause than may appear, and in my speech I shall divulge it. I call upon the chairman to enquire once more and in an emphatic manner for name, domicile and age."

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Chairman: "I ask you once more and in an emphatic manner for, — for, — for —"

The supreme provost marshal: "Name, domicile and age."

Chairman: "You heard. Eh, — eh, — eh, — give us this information."

Accused: "Simon Lamm, of Brody in Galicia, 58 years old, married, my father's name was Abraham —"

Supreme provost-marshall: "We did not ask you about your father and whether you are married. As a matter of fact, I'll tell you about your father myself. I call upon the chairman to draw the attention of the accused to the fact that he is not to try and complicate his offence by dragging in persons who do not belong here. Further, I call upon the chairman to ask the accused about his previous punishments."

Chairman: "Yes. Eh, — eh, — eh, — I draw your attention, and, and, and —"

Supreme provost-marshall: "Whether he has already been punished."

Chairman: "Eh ?"

Accused: "Yes, by my father aforesaid —"

Supreme provost-marshall: "I draw the attention of this court to the fact that the accused, with malicious perseverance, indeed, not to say with scornful cynicism, such as is typical only of the most desperate criminals, is evading a direct answer. The chairman is asking you whether you have been punished in a public court of justice."

Accused: "Never. I have a clean record."

Supreme provost-marshall: "All criminals make that assertion. Unfortunately, the archives of the local and district law courts in Galicia were destroyed by the Russian invasion, — I am sure that they could tell a tale, but a different one from that of the accused."

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And in any case, even if he has not actually been punished hitherto, it would not be surprising; I have already expressed my view of the value and importance of those civil courts. I call upon the chairman to ask the accused whether he knows why he is standing his trial."

Chairman: "Do you know why, hm, — hm, — you are standing your trial."

Accused: "I have been sitting still for nine months and did not know why, now I am standing my trial and do not know why either."

Supreme provost-marshal: "I call upon the chairman to call the accused emphatically to order. He is to answer this court with respect and without joking."

Chairman: "Yes. That's right. I call you to order, — eh, — eh —"

Supreme provost-marshal: "May I ask the chairman to permit me, — with a view to hastening today's proceedings, — to ask the accused a few of the most important questions direct."

Chairman: "Of course, — eh, — eh —"

Supreme provost-marshal: "Prisoner in the dock, you will now answer me. Since we are here dealing with important State and military secrets, the publication of which might considerably endanger the interests of the Empire and the position of our glorious armies, you must answer as concisely as possible, and not enter into explanations. We have the most detailed knowledge of your guilt, so no kind of quibbles and denials, — I specially remind you of this, — no kind of denials, — will avail you at all. Prisoner in the dock, do you know the names Rozsa Sándor and Babinský?"

Accused: "I've never heard of them."

Supreme provost-marshal: "Good, you deny it. But that's your business. Could you tell us about your relations with Nuchem Schapira.

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Accused: "I don't know him."

Supreme provost-marshall: "You persist in your denials. Will you tell us who was really responsible for the unfortunate result of the battle of Rawaruska?"

Accused: "It was said that an incompetent General —"

Supreme provost-marshall: "Hush. I have already admonished you. It seems that you have deliberately set out to adhere to a system of denials. What do you know about the fall of the fortress of Przemysl in the year 1915?"

Accused: "What has all this got to do with Simon Lamm? Przemysl fell because —"

Supreme provost-marshall: "Hush! You reckless man, are your past offences not enough for you, that you wish to burden your conscience by betraying military secrets as well?"

Accused: "I don't understand —"

Supreme provost-marshall: "That's enough. You will understand. We know everything and will tell you." To the chairman: "The examination of the accused is concluded. The accused persists in denials. I ask for the witnesses to be summoned."

Chairman: "The witnesses, yes, the witnesses."

The supreme provost-marshall: "One after another. First, Papa Declich."

Chairman: "Yes, Papa Declich."

Papa Declich was led in. The witness did not understand German, and so Budi, a member of the court, was designated as interpreter. From the details of his nationality it appeared that he was a vine-grower and farmer from Visignano in Istria, and was 48 years old. The extraordinarily interesting cross-examination made it clear that he was neither a relative nor a friend of the accused Simon Lamm, in fact, that he saw him there that day for the first time in his life,

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— but when his home in Istria was searched, portraits of Dante, Manzoni and Cavallotti were found there.

The witness stood down.

Dr. Povich-Rosetti, the following witness, was also unacquainted with the accused, but he admitted that he had discovered a new kind of fire-arms which he had offered to the Entente States. He asserted, however, that he had done this in the year 1910 when he could have known nothing about the present combination of States hostile to us. In reply to a question of the supreme provost-marshall, whether he knew what the "Free Thought" was, the witness declared that he had never heard of free thought in Austria, and that on principle he could not approve of free-thinking.

Mr. Aaron Wilder, the final witness, a hotel-keeper from Cracow, used to see the accused during his visits to Cracow. The accused always gave the witness the impression of being a thoroughly respectable man. If he stayed in his hotel, he always paid his bill without haggling, and he always tipped the servants properly, — and therefore the witness was greatly surprised to find Mr. Lamm in the dock.

Upon these words the supreme provost-marshall arose, and demanded the immediate arrest of the witness for clear complicity and connivance with the accused.

The court unanimously agreed to the arrest, and Mr. Aaron Wilder was led off into the telephone box.

Next were read the affidavits of witnesses who were not present. Mr. Janko Mlacker stated that in America he had been robbed of 45,000 crowns which he had wanted to save from the pending bankruptcy of his employer's business, — whether the accused was the individual who had robbed him of that money, he could not say

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with certainty, but there were a number of indications which might corroborate the identity of Lamm with the unknown culprit.

The artillery-man related that he did not know whether the accused Lamm had taken those boots for which he was being prosecuted, but that he himself had most assuredly not appropriated them.

The king of Magyar pickpockets declared solemnly that it was his duty towards his personal honour and the honour of the chivalrous nation of which he was a member, not to inculpate by his evidence a man who perhaps was not guilty. From his own experience he knew to what lengths human cunning and malice could go, and he himself was suffering for transgressions which he had never committed. The pocket-book which had been found on him, had been given him by an unknown man to take care of: he had not even looked into it, and it was not beyond the bounds of possibility that the unknown man was his sworn enemy, who in this way wished to deprive him of his honour and ruin his social position. Of course, — whether the accused, whom by the way, he did not know, had impersonated him incognito in all the remaining thefts with which he had been charged also unjustly, he could not say. But if this were the case, he demanded that he should be severely punished, and that he himself should be immediately released, for "justice above all" was the lustrous motto of the Magyar nation.

This concluded the case for the prosecution. The supreme provost-marshall then spoke as follows :

"Gentlemen. we are living in times which both in their significance and in their horror surpass everything of which humanity has hitherto been a witness. Whether we search in the remotest and darkest recesses of human history, whether we pass the bygone centuries in review, we shall find nothing that resembles these days of ours. The dreadful "bellum omnium contra Omnes", that phrase from the

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old classic author, has today become a ghastly reality. We all know the origin and cause of this unexampled struggle. A number of European States have for a long time and with unconcealed hatred observed the progress and prosperity of our Monarchy and of our powerful neighbour-state, whose victorious troops are fighting shoulder to shoulder with our dauntless armies. Trade, industry and commerce flourished, the people enjoyed a wide degree of liberty, our Empire was a paradise upon earth. But hatred is an evil and malicious neighbour. Hatred, yes it was hatred, which flung the torch of war into our heavenly prosperity. Hatred, of which our immortal Grillparzer so strikingly said, that the gods placed it in the soul of evil instead of virtue.

The enemy reckoned upon two factors to help him. Upon the military unpreparedness of the Monarchy, and upon those among its subjects which it had nurtured like serpents in its bosom. But they reckoned falsely. The empire rallied around its waving banner with the noble device : "With united strength", — and the serpents at home did not dare to show themselves and to set about their work with poisoned fangs.

Of course, there were a few exceptions. And let me say immediately that one of them you can see here in the dock. His name is Simon Lamm.

Our armies have courageously resisted the enemy without, we, in a no less arduous service, we servants of military justice and state integrity, have thwarted the enemy within.

Gentlemen, I must, at the very beginning, point out that our feeble resources have, in themselves, not been able to defeat this inner enemy, small in numbers though he was. But in this we received assistance, and here on behalf of our mighty country, I will express thanks to all who afforded us support in this respect.

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People, even of low estate, realised the significance of the time and the hugeness of the struggle; their eyes kept watch, their ears listened, their hands wrote. We must thank all those anonymous persons, who in the service of the State took upon themselves the odium of so-called denunciators, and assisted us with all their strength. There were not, and there are not, any patriots greater than these, and the very fact that they desired to remain unknown, adorns their heads with a renunciation, nothing less than antique in its virtue.

It was one of these anonymous patriots by whom the treacherous activities of Simon Lamm were divulged to us. Utter this name of Simon Lamm, and if you do not tremble with horror and repugnance, you are not worthy of setting foot upon the soil of our country. Simon, — by what motives was his father actuated when he gave him this name? Simon, who denied our Lord Jesus Christ, Simon who was the creator of the historical crime of simony, or sacrilege. I direct my question through all historical ages: was there ever in the world a father who pre-destined his child's career thus by the mere name? What inveterate cynicism, what dreadful criminal instincts! You will deny and trade with a people's holiest possession, — its native land. Yes, gentlemen, all this is implied in the name of Simon. But the fact that it was pre-destined is no justification. Kismet or fate holds good only with our glorious Allies the Turks, but we have been given freedom of will, and a man is always what he makes of himself, as the renowned Austrian poet Tschabuschnigg appropriately remarked. How many men have already borne the fateful name, the name Simon, and did not proceed along the path which was pre-destined to them thereby, — I have in mind Samson, whose name is almost identical with Simon, and how he fought against the Philistines, the enemies of his country. Or the prominent

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Czech painter Šimon, — can you imagine him at the side of, and working hand in hand with this Simon?

But let us go further. Lamm is his surname. Lamm! No greater cynicism has been perpetrated since the creation of the world than that such a scoundrel should be called Lamm, a lambkin, a lamb, the symbol of our Saviour, an animal which, after the dove, is the most peacable and most virtuous: This criminal's surname is Lamm. Gentlemen, a greater spiritual derangement, a more depraved contempt for all that the whole of mankind has hitherto held in esteem, I cannot imagine. These two names would of themselves suffice." (Sensation throughout the court).

"And look at the accused. Gentlemen, this individual is laughing. This outcast of humanity, branded by his own father and by fate, is laughing. Gentlemen, words fail me.

But away with emotion and stirring of the spirit. We are here as representatives of justice, — and this is not only blind, but must likewise be inaccessible to all spiritual emotions.

The accused has said of himself that he was punished by his father. He was punished by the cynic who, with the name Simon, pre-destined him for the career of a scoundrel, — how depraved must his youth have been, when even his cynic of a father thought fit to chastise and punish it.

The documents of the Galician courts were destroyed during the Russian invasion; this is a pity, for I am certain that they would have thrown an unsurmised light upon the curriculum vitae of this individual. The accused has been relying upon this and has persisted in his denials. But vainly.

Gentlemen, the individual present here has robbed and murdered in company with the notorious Rozsa Sándor amid the forests and plains of Hungary, and when Rozsa Sándor was apprehended, he

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made his escape to Bohemia, where he joined Babinský's gang, and continued to carry on his trade. Babinský met with a well-merited punishment, but the individual called Lamm made his way in good time to Vienna, where together with Nuchem Schapira he forged banknotes. Nuchem Schapira fell into the hands of justice, but his accomplice, the doubly worthy Mr. Lamm, disappeared from view. It is not beyond the bounds of possibility, in fact, I incline strongly to the belief, that he sailed across the ocean and there deprived the unfortunate Janko Mlacker of those 45,000 crowns, which that trusty official desired to save there for his master who was on the verge of bankruptcy.

That he slipped away from it all and disappeared at the right time so as not to leave the slightest trace, is a proof of the unusual artfulness, the eel-like slipperiness and agility of this criminal.

But his real harvest-time began with the blood-red human harvests in the great war.

Here, gentlemen, I shall be as brief as possible; this is imposed upon me also by great military secrets. I can say only one thing: upon this man's head clings the blood of thousands and thousands of guiltless soldiers, he supplied the enemy with objects which cost milliards. I will only say what I can say: this Simon Lamm was responsible for Rawaruska, this Simon Lamm was responsible for the fall of the fortress of Przemysl. What for? Why? It would be hard to say. Perhaps his innate leaning towards rascality, perhaps the roubles which today have been buried by him somewhere; for this cunning wretch pretends to be a man who has been brought to beggary by the Russian invasion, — we know the tricks of such evil-doers.

Minima non curat praetor, it is true, — but it is true only in ancient Rome. Our victorious armies have driven the Russian foe

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far beyond the frontiers of the monarchy, — there was nothing to be undertaken on a large scale, so Praetor Lamm turned his attention to the minima.

Gentlemen, those boots with which stern justice has burdened the life of that dauntless artillery-man can with confidence be transferred to the account of that excellent person Simon Lamm, and that he made his appearance in Hungary as the king of Magyar pickpockets can be asserted with as much assurance as that twice two is not five.

I will conclude. This man is capable of anything, and has committed all offences which he could commit. In the interests of the State and of humanity to whom his very existence is a menace, both pro praeterito as well pro futuro, for what he has perpetrated, as well as for what he might yet perpetrate, I urge you, gentlemen, to sentence him to death by hanging."

The accused and his defending counsel, overwhelmed by convulsive shudders, had not a word to say. The court also was trembling from the effects of the public prosecutor's speech, and adjourned for deliberation.

The deliberation was very noisy, but did not last long. The court returned and the chairman announced: "The accused is convicted on all counts and is guilty of all the charges; the court sentences him to fourteen days' open arrest."

It grew dark. The room was full of merriment. The improvised proceedings had pleased everybody. For several days the room had been pervaded by discontent and silent despair, — something had to be done. I am not fond of having such mournful faces around me.

Mr. Fels shook hands with me gratefully: "I won't forget that of you as long as I live. And I believe that it might be so in reality."

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Mr. Lamm thought it was a good thing that I was among them and not among the ones upstairs. He had quite a clear idea of what it would be like when he arrived upstairs.

"And believe me, if I were standing my trial before a real court, and they were to charge me with all these offences, should I not really know how to defend myself?" he added guilelessly.

"Well, fourteen days was nothing for that" laughed Mr. Fels. And number 60 declared unanimously that similar proceedings could be carried out every Sunday.

We shall see.

Meanwhile, I sought to get to bed. I had been a little over-heated, now I was trembling with a chill. Papa Declich brought me his blanket with concern and wrapped me up.

I knew that in the afternoon he had found a louse, a real louse in it, — but I raised no protest, nor did I shudder with horror. It's all one. I was cold. "Grazie, Papa".

XXVII.

And again a new arrival in number 60.

A reddish little man, — reddish eyes, reddish hair, reddish face, reddish beard, reddish suit,— entered without a greeting, strolled through the room, sat down at the table, and as if he were at home, took out a tin of sardines and a slice of bread from the box and began to eat.

Dr. Povich-Rosetti sat down with him to hear what he had to tell. The little man talked slowly as if he were weighing every word, he talked softly as if he were expounding great secrets, and when he had finished eating, he looked around at the piles of straw mattresses, discovered an unoccupied heap, swung himself

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on to it, lay down on his back, folded his hands under his head and went to sleep.

The doctor acquainted me with the result of his enquiry. An Englishman, a real Englishman. He had lived at Mödling for the last eighteen years. When the German naval victory over Admiral Jellicoe had recently been celebrated by hanging out flags, he had pulled down one of these flags at Mödling and trampled on it in his anger, — he said it was not a victory but a defeat of the Germans, the Germans had wanted to break through, but had been driven back again, and so it was no victory. And it was for having trampled upon the flag that he was with us. The doctor had arranged to take English lessons with him, he himself would be one of his pupils, and was there anybody else who wanted to join in ?

Mr. Fels came forward.

The Englishman slept and slept. The doctor was impatient, — he wanted to begin at once. He woke the Englishman, offered him a cigarette ; the Englishman took it, thrust it into his breast-pocket and went on sleeping.

"We'll let him sleep" remarked Mr. Fels "these Englishmen are all more or less without manners."

We took our turn at walking, talked, whistled, — the Englishman slept.

Papa Declich received a card from the Rossau barracks. From Dušek. Dušek asked whether under my bed, that once was his, there was any sign of his winter boots. Papa Declich studied the card, and suddenly gave an artful smile.

"What is it ?"

"Boots, — why boots ? He wants to know whether we are here, and how we are getting on. We will write to him at once, — in a case like this we need not wait till Sunday."

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Papa Declich did the composition, I wrote. That we had searched the whole room and enquired of all the gentlemen who were in it, but there was no sign of the boots. Only Hedrich and the sergeant had left our room, but they had not taken them away. Everything was as of old, and everybody sent him their greetings.

Papa smiled at his statesman-like communication.

(Later, when I met Dušek at liberty, he assured me that he was concerned only to get a sign of life from us. He was allowed to write from there only once a month, and then he used to write only home, — the enquiry for the boots had been at once granted him as a special case).

The Englishman had concluded his slumbers. He jumped down from the straw mattress, opened his box and again began to eat.

The doctor prepared some paper, sharpened a pencil, walked about and waited. The Englishman ate slowly, chewed with deliberation, and clearly had a lot of time to spare.

At last they began. The doctor superintended the instruction, asked questions, and pointed to the table, bench, straw mattresses, knife, floor, ceiling. The Englishman answered in a hesitant and quiet manner. Was he reflecting? Could he not remember? The doctor, an Italian, soon got excited and began to shout. The Englishman let nothing disturb his heedless composure.

Mr. Fels came away, sat down with me and said that the man had no method, that he had probably forgotten a good deal, and that it was a pity to waste time with him. He invited Mr. Goldenstein to a game of wolves and sheep.

The Englishman was already climbing back again on to the straw mattresses, lay down on his back and slept. The doctor sat down with the players, — he was quite agitated and excited from his lesson, — Mr. Fels again pointed out to him that the Englishman

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had no method, but the doctor took the view that it would come in time.

Warder Sponner came and asked who wanted to have his things fumigated. Papa Declich and Karl took their blankets and went.

Warder Sponner called for me to go to the Street of the Tigers.

I did not go gladly, I did not feel well, and the sun and the people in the streets were repugnant to me. "But they will say unto thee: Gird thyself, and thou wilt gird thyself; and they will say unto thee; thou shalt go, and thou wilt go" as it says in Holy Writ, or words to that effect.

A defence-corps man in front, a defence-corps man behind, I between them, — so we went through the objectionable street.

In the Tigergasse, number 11, on the third storey, was the well-known room. Dr. Frank was sitting there with Dr. Šámal. We exchanged hearty greetings with this man of gold, — so he was still a free man and had not forgotten . . .

"How are you?"

"Friend, as might be expected in jail."

"And are you well?", and my friend gave a searching glance at my face.

No, I will not lie to him . . . "I am not, as you see".

"And he refuses to go to the doctor" intervened Dr. Frank reproachfully.

"I don't want your doctors, I don't want anything from you whatever" I answered him with irritation.

"Perhaps, though, you ought —" suggested Dr. Šámal.

"Don't let's speak about it; it's a pity to waste our time, we have only the officially prescribed allowance."

"Come, come" said Dr. Frank nettled.

"And what do you do the whole day?" asked Dr. Šámal.

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"I watch the theatre of humanity. I am locked up with murderers, thieves and robbers, who regard me as a colleague; I observe them, listen to them, and I warrant you that this worthy authority here, with all his apparatus, will never obtain as much information from them as I possess —"

"I admit that" said Frank smiling, and he displayed the gold strips in his fine teeth.

"To give you at least some specimens" I continued, "the king of Magyar pickpockets, a man who has murdered his wife and mother-in-law, a man who has stolen motor-car wheels —"

"This will make a book" remarked Dr. Šámal.

"And I shall cut a pretty figure in it" smiled Frank.

"Well, — according to your deserts."

"And to whom would you dedicate it?" asked Šámal.

"Possibly to the worthy authority here. He has deserved well of me. For two months he has supplied me with lodgings, illumination all night, heating, estimable society, — just because of four small poems."

"I think there were other reasons" remarked Dr. Šámal, "and influence from above, and very powerful hands —"

Frank smiled mysteriously.

"Whichever it may be, — here I am, and the immediate Government organ which I am holding on to, and which is holding on to me, is the worthy authority here. By the way, I have drawn up a neat and skilful scheme for a court-martial, — would you like to hear it? May I tell it?"

Frank smiled and nodded.

"Well then, a man is walking along the street, or is sitting in his office (my case), — suddenly a detective comes up and informs him that he is arrested. Why? The examining superintendent will

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let him know that, he is told. Good. And the examining superintendent informs him that the proceedings have been taken at the instance of the military commander; the man, it appears, has stolen St. Stephen's Tower. The man, of course, denies this. The superintendent enters it in his report and remarks: Your affair is very simple, a matter of a few days; we will look into your statements, on Friday or Saturday, — today is Tuesday, — we will have you called and will proceed to examine your case on its merits. You will then engage a defending counsel, — here the man protests; he does not understand the need for a defending counsel in so obvious an affair, the superintendent then wonders how it is possible not to want a defending counsel when St. Stephen's Tower is concerned, — well, so they part. The man waits; Saturday comes, — nothing, the next Saturday again nothing, the third Saturday nothing either, and the fourth, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth, — still nothing. Finally he is summoned to have his case investigated on his merits, and the authorities inform him that it has been ascertained by the enquiries of a commission and by the testimony of several credible witnesses, that St. Stephen's Tower is still in its place, — (the man's eyes sparkle), — you did not steal it, — (the man stands up gratefully), — but we cannot discharge you: there exists a well-founded suspicion that you wanted to sell the harbour of Cattaro to the Japanese. And so you are kept in prison, and will be kept there until —".

Frank turned red in the face and took out his watch.

A defence-corps man in front, a defence-corps man behind, I between them and in a good humour. Let him know that I know.

Number 60 was inspecting those who had been fumigated, — they had just returned. Their clothes were hanging on them as if they had been horribly soaked.

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"Is it any good?" I asked Declich.

"Until somebody brings in something else to us again" he remarked philosophically.

XXVIII.

Dr. Povich-Rosetti dropped the study of English. The superintendent who had caught rheumatism in his back, asked the doctor to come and rub his back for him, during which process he informed him that the Englishman was a tailor at Mödling, his name was Smith, and that when he had pulled down the flag and trampled on it, he had been as drunk as a lord.

The Englishman did not appear to notice that he had lost his last pupil. He joined Mr. Fröhlich and Karl in their walking party, paced up and down with them in silence, ate everything that the orderlies pushed into the room on the kneading-board, and seemed to enjoy it thoroughly, — otherwise he did nothing but sleep.

It was in the afternoon. I was sitting on my straw mattress, opposite me behind the table sat Mr. Lamm with his hands clenched and his head propped up by his clenched hands, — his little straw hat had slipped back to his neck; he looked at me with his shrewd eyes and said: "Do you call this a life? This is no life. If a man shuts up a dog, he lets him out for a little time now and then; if a man shuts up a man, there is nothing left for him to do but to regret that he is not a dog. I have been cooped up here now for six weeks, — why? I don't know; my wife doesn't know", — (Mr. Lamm did not say "meine Frau", but "meine Fru"), — "my children don't know either. But the superintendent declares that I wanted to get my son out of the army. The superintendent is a very wise man, he knows a lot, but he doesn't know everything.

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I said to the superintendent: "I'm in prison for wanting to get my son out of the army, but my son was taken at the very first levy, he's passed through the volunteer academy, finished up as an ensign, gained the large silver medal, — and the most interesting thing about it is that a Russian bullet smashed his left arm; it had to be cut off at the elbow, they gave him an artificial limb, he wasn't discharged from the army, but was put into an office and did clerical work. And I've been here now for six weeks because they say I wanted to get my son out of the army. And the superintendent smiled and said: That's hard luck on you, but we have proofs. They have proofs, — but it's a certain thing that my son is a cripple and that I'm in jail, and it's a certain thing that I don't understand how the one could have arisen from the other, — Mr. M. you're the most intelligent man in this room, kindly explain it to me."

I asked him whether he had made any attempt to save his son from military service.

"Any attempt, what attempt? Is there anybody who dashes off to join of his own accord? Wouldn't anyone rather stay at home? If that's a punishable offence, then they ought to imprison every father who has a grown-up lad."

"Wait a bit, my dear Mr. Lamm, permit me to ask you just one question. Before the levy, did you speak to anybody on the tribunal?"

"I did. Why shouldn't I speak? One man can speak to another."

"Well let's suppose that you spoke to the regimental doctor, and that you spoke to him about what was going to happen to your boy."

"What else should I talk to the regimental doctor about? I spoke about my son."

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"And did you slip anything into his hand?"

"Why shouldn't I? Everybody did it."

"Yes, but you see that this is a punishable offence."

But Mr. Lamm became excited: "A punishable offence? But the lad had to join, he has the silver medal, and his left arm's off — what's a punishable offence? Tell me, what's a punishable offence?"

"You have attempted to corrupt a military official for the benefit of your son, and —"

"But then it is the military official who ought to be here, and not me. As a father it was my duty to do everything possible to protect my son from being crippled, — I felt from the very beginning that he wouldn't get out of it safely, and he didn't, — nebbich, — and is that what I'm to be kept in prison for? I don't understand it."

I explained again and again the principle and reality of the punishable offence, — but in vain; Mr. Lamm did not grasp it and did not understand it. The Polish Jews have their own logic, their own code of morals, their own opinions, — and their own heads. Messrs. Fels, Goldenstein and Wilder, who joined us in the course of the conversation to which they listened, also declared unanimously that Mr. Lamm was right, and that in any other country not he, but only the military official concerned, could and should be in prison.

After all, — what do I know of the paths along which military justice proceeds in other countries! I have made the acquaintance of that prevailing here, and I am so sick of it that I really do not desire to become acquainted with any other.

Dr. Povich-Rosetti returned from the superintendent. He had again driven the rheumatism out of his back. The superintendent promised that he would give us a new orderly. For curious things

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had been happening; the censorists had lost several shirts from their boxes, Papa Declich missed his cigars, Budi's tobacco-case had disappeared. And it was ascertained that Karl, our orderly, never went out for exercise, but that during this period he was always visited by the artillery-man, our former colleague, who instead of going out for exercise, came into our cell, chatted with Karl and disappeared in good time. It had further been discovered that Karl and the artillery-man had recently been living in a certain state of prosperity; they smoked, drank and evinced satisfaction at labours well performed; Dr. Povich-Rosetti therefore intervened in higher quarters, and now informed us in a whisper that the "landlord from number 58" was coming to be our orderly.

The landlord from number 58 was a good-humoured giant. Cut an elephant into two halves, place the larger portion of its body upon its hind-legs, put on that a large human head with a horrible red scar in place of the left eye, and you will have a faithful replica of our future orderly. His history was a familiar one; he had been in the army, had come home and caught his wife with somebody else, — he had shot both her and himself. He had killed her and severely wounded himself, but had escaped with his life. And he had escaped only to be tried and sentenced to twenty years, and all that was now left to him of life he contemplated with only one eye. His voice was soft and kindly, everybody was fond of him; he walked about without a coat, always wearing a green vest.

Within five minutes Karl had learnt that he was leaving number 60, and who would be his successor.

He was furious. He said he would go to the superintendent, he would find out who had slandered him and how, he would discover whether there was still any fairness and justice in the world. And

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the "landlord", the "Trampl", he said, took a full hour to stir a limb; the gentlemen would see what the cell would look like; he had kept everything clean and tidy, and he was not going to have any "Katzelmacher" think that he could meddle with everything here and give orders to everybody, even if he were a doctor; besides, who could tell what sort of a doctor he was; today every other person gave himself the title of doctor. He, Karl, would show this doctor that three times three was not ten.

He went to the censorists and explained the injustice which had been committed against him. Messrs. Fels, Goldenstein and Fröhlich listened to him with interest; in that drab world a man was grateful for any incident which distracted him even only a little from the situation in which his own ego was involved. And then, — Karl had become their personal servant. He waited on them at table, in the evening he handed them the bottles, poured out the wine; nobody's "Karl" sounded so commandingly imperious as theirs when they called him, — so they listened and nodded their heads. And Karl held forth: If anything in the room had been lost, he said, it was not his fault; he did without his exercise and kept watch to prevent any strange person from entering the room; of course, now and then he had to slip off, and, said he, if the gentlemen had boxes, they should lock them, — he had closed boxes which had been left open quite a hundred times; the boxes were always left so that the inside of them could be seen, and after all, he said, we were in jail, there was nothing but thieves and robbers right and left, — Karl spoke with emotion, I was expecting him to burst into tears.

Mr. Fels came to me and remarked that this man was being treated unfairly. On that he would stake his life. Thereupon he went to Dr. Povich-Rosetti, who with a dark look had watched

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the whole of this scene, and told him the same. The doctor shrugged his shoulders and declared that as long as he lived he would never again interfere in private affairs.

The Polish Jews, — curious people. Sometimes so artful that they amaze you, and sometimes again so simple that they also amaze you.

We went out for exercise. The censorists slipped into the superintendent's office. After a while they came out into the yard, and Mr. Fels said to me: "Karl will remain. We managed it with the superintendent. An innocent man must not suffer."

And Dr. Povich-Rosetti then said to me: "There you are. First of all they egg me on, and when I do as they wanted, they go and make me look foolish."

The engineer had also heard about the change in number 60, and asked how the matter stood. I told him. He thought that Karl was a "Gauner", that the Galicians were fools, and that he himself would have been willing to take over the duties as our orderly. I expressed surprise. Why not, he said. He was not ashamed of work. But his colour heightened a little. And hastily he pointed out to me the new arrival in their room; also a Polish Jew, a distiller, who had entered the army and had climbed to the position of officer's servant to his bookkeeper in Vienna. Of course, he continued to be the master of his military superior, and he carried on in such a way that he fell into the hands of the military police. That day he had been cross-examined, and when he had come back he had told them about it; he did this admirably, — a regular photographer of speech. He replied to every question of the superintendent with another question, and he spoke in such a way that after two hours' cross-examination the superintendent did not know what he was to enter into the report. And all who had been present

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at the cross-examination had laughed till they cried, — only the Galician had maintained a surprised composure, as if he did not understand how anybody could laugh at such obvious things. Of course, he did laugh, — and very heartily too, — but only in the cell when he told them all about it.

I had a look at the fellow: short, almost shrunken, wearing a golden pince-nez, and on his smart private uniform he had red stripes sewn on, — the badge of an officer's servant; he was conversing confidentially with Messrs. Fels, Goldenstein and Wilder, as if he had known them for at least ten years, saw them daily, and yesterday on the last occasion.

I told the engineer that I felt how all this was ceasing to interest me. I lacked sunshine, air, a broad horizon, liberty. And that after my last cross-examination by Frank, I had expected that something would happen, that either I should be discharged, or they would sentence me, or would accuse me of something else. I said that this being deposited upon ice was highly repugnant to me.

He smiled knowingly. What did I expect, — this was only two months. When my affairs had been at a deadlock for a year or two, like his, then I might talk about being tired of everything, of an objectionable situation.

Yes, yes, there are days when life is covered by a heavy mist. And when a man thinks that it is impossible to go on living in such a way, that something must happen, a wonder, a miracle, a gigantic change.

And nothing happens, nothing whatever. But he goes on living. And the heavy mist becomes such an ordinary thing that if it were to disappear suddenly, the man would wonder how he could live without it.

XXIX.

Again I went to the street of the Tigers.

A defence-corps man in front of me, a defence-corps man behind me. But they did not know their way about the streets of the Josefstadt, and so I took over the command. To the right, — straight along, — to the left. They felt the comic aspect of their mission, and explained that they were from the opposite part of the city, from Simmering. Here they had never been in their lives before.

It was a fine day, it was warm, — but I should rather have remained in my gloomy cell. Everything here was so strange to me, everything was so objectionable, — only there was I at home. Why were they dragging me out, what was this excursion for? Some visitor under Frank's supervision, a visitor who would again unwittingly show me how I was sinking, — what for? I knew that myself, I felt it, why then display me to the people? and give him, Frank, an opportunity of gloating over my sick appearance?

We had arrived. On the third storey they handed me over to Frank.

Frank, correct, spruce, clean-shaven, informed me dryly that there was a visitor for me; he took out his watch, — in ten minutes they would be there.

And he immersed himself in some document or other.

His secretary clattered with a typewriter. In the room there was a buzzing of flies; through the open window the noisy breath of the city entered.

A knock, — Madam M. L. entered. In her hand she again carried roses.

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Frank stood up. He looked at me, smiled with that smile of his, at which the golden strips in his white teeth glistened, and announced in a coldly dry voice as if he were reading a verdict: "Would you please see that today's visit is as short as possible. Perhaps you would be so good as to arrange only the next meeting, for Mr. M. will be set at liberty tomorrow, at the latest the day after tomorrow, — today is Friday, so that will be on Sunday. I have already had the order submitted to the military commander for signature."

He continued to look at me, — and in this look was contained everything: Mild reproaches that I had been unfair to him, quiet satisfaction at the joyful news, the triumph of an unknown person who can at last reveal himself in his true form, — a human being, really a human being. So my inner voice had not deceived me, — from our first meeting I had felt drawn towards him, but I had let my reason stifle this feeling, and endeavoured to be spiteful and even insulting to him; and I was so, — yet all the while this letter of the law contained a soul, this personification of a sub-section contained a heart. A human being, a human being.

But Madam M. L. sat down without a word, as if she did not know whether to believe it, and when she began to believe it, as if she did not know whether it was all a dream or not. And in her face she had, strangely enough, an expression of painful surprise. (Later on she admitted to me that she had heard only the tone of Frank's voice but not his words, and from the tone of it she had felt that my situation had become more acute).

But I preserved my composure; not even with the flicker of an eyelash did I show that I was astonished, stirred with emotion; I felt that this role with Frank must be played to the end in the style in which it had been begun.

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And in order that Madam M. L. might regain her composure, I related to her the anecdote with which Mr. Goldenstein had entertained me the day before. How a Polish Jew wanted to get married, how the "Schadchen"^{*} found him a bride,—beautiful, rich, in touch with the best circles, her mother well-educated, but her father no longer alive. The bridegroom, however, soon found out that her father was in jail. But the worthy "Schadchen" was not to be disconcerted: In jail? And do you call that being alive? You see, this Jew was right; being in jail, — that is no life. It will be better when I am outside. So please remain in Vienna for another day or two, until I am set at liberty; the official thinks that it will be tomorrow or the day after tomorrow, — then I will gratefully accept today's roses.

Frank saw that I was helping Madam M. L. from some astonishment which he had caused her, and he excused himself for not having prepared her for it; she should pardon him for not having done so, for —

Madam M. L. burst out laughing.

"Could you tell me, sir, whether Dr. Sieghart intervened on my behalf?" I asked Frank.

"Nobody, nobody whatever. Just as nobody can take the credit for having brought you here," (he uttered this sentence with emphasis, and I thought to myself: Aha, a supplement to the conversation with Dr. Sámal), "so nobody was the cause of your leaving here. Everything came about by a natural process in accordance with the law. I ascertained that your statements were correct, and I took steps for you to be set at liberty."

"So it was you alone?"

"Oh no" he said deprecatingly, "the law just took its course."

* marriage-broker.

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I went away with my corporal, and the only thought which passed through my soul was: Thank God that it was not Sieghart. It might have been. Easily. For throughout the period of persecution he was in touch with the Minister of War and National Defence, — they often used to be his evening guests in the Teinfaltstrasse, — he might have spoken a word and I should have been at liberty; thank God that he did not speak. After the arrest of Kramář I went to him to intervene (it was then that his secretary received me), and at that time I did not yet know that he was one of the main instigators of our Czech persecution, — I would have been willing to be under an obligation to anybody else but him. And so I was not, — oh, excellent Frank!

I conducted my defence-corps men back to arrest. The sun, the good sun warmed me, the mild air fondled me, — good heavens, are the hours really numbered to the time I shall be able to pass through this street, a free man, unrestricted by time and space? The street was filled with bustle, its signs of life flitted before my eyes, and I should be able to plunge into these waves and swim where and how I pleased.

We arrived home, they wanted to hand me over to the superintendent, but nobody could be seen anywhere. The door to number 59 was open, there were throngs of uniforms inside. Shouting, talking, — and outside Mr. Kranz was hopping from one foot to the other with a devilish smile; he waved his hands and beckoned me to come and listen.

What was happening? A cross-examination. There was a Lieutenant-Colonel, three Governors, a superintendent, warders. The Lieutenant-Colonel was making ready for an utterance of thunder, — the Governors were cross-examining, somebody was replying, and Mr. Kranz expounded to me the main features of

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this drama: The examining superintendent had come upon the tracks of one of his censorists who was corresponding with his wife through the advertisement section of the "Neues Wiener Tagblatt". He complained of the "conditions in the sanatorium", of the "insufficient food", hoped that "the physician in charge" would soon release him, assured "his dear wife and children of his undiminished love", asked her to send him money because "it is expensive here", and it was necessary to give "tips to the servants" on every occasion, — and a whole lot of similar effusions which could have been written on any postcard. As, however, the Governor had made correspondence difficult for the censorists, the incarcerated Hebrew had hit upon this method, not unfamiliar in ordinary life, but here extremely unusual, and the gentlemen would have liked to know how he had managed it.

"Is there anybody here who has the "Neues Wiener Tagblatt" ? asked the Governor.

Silence.

"Has anybody here the "Neues Wiener Tagblatt"? repeated Lieutenant-Colonel Werner sharply.

Again silence.

"Search the room" ordered the Governor.

The search did not take long. The superintendent thrust his hand beneath the nearest straw mattress and drew out, — the "Neues Wiener Tagblatt".

"Who has read this paper?" the Governor could be heard asking.

"Yes, who has read it?" thundered the Lieutenant-Colonel. Somebody came forward: "I did".

"Who gave it to you?"

"Mauthner."

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"Mauthner, who did you get the paper from?"

"From Goldenstein."

"Goldenstein, whose paper is it?"

"I got it from Kohn."

"Good heavens, what fools these Jews are. They answer like idiots" remarked Mr. Kranz to me in a contemptuous whisper.

"Kohn, who gave you the paper?" continued the cross-examination.

"I, — I got it from an orderly: From the young one with the blue cap."

"Bring the orderly with the blue cap." thundered the Lieutenant-Colonel.

Schmied, our warden, flew out, dashed into number 58, and dragged the orderly with the blue cap to the cross-examination. A lad of eighteen or nineteen years, with the expression of a thorough-paced rogue.

"Who did you get the Neues Wiener Tagblatt from?" The question was bellowed from the lips of the Lieutenant-Colonel.

And the orderly promptly confessed: "I put three cigarettes on the window-ledge of the closet, go back half an hour later, and the Neues Wiener Tagblatt is lying there in their place. That's all I know." The room was silent. As if everybody's supply of wisdom and superiority had given out. At my side Mr. Kranz was hopping about with joy from one foot to the other, and was rubbing his hands.

There was a rattle of swords. "Let's clear off, they've finished. They're coming out" and Mr. Kranz was already at the other end of the passage with his broom in his hands.

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Number 60 received the news of my departure with undisguised lack of approval. In particular, the censorists were of the opinion that "it would have been time enough when we all went"; Papa Declich shook hands with me and did not say a word. He stood upon his straw mattress and gave a sly peep into the yard. But even these glances were in spite of himself, — something was astir in his soul, and he was sad.

It was in the afternoon during exercise. The engineer had already heard of my forthcoming departure, — for him it would mean a severe blow, he said, — now he would have nobody to talk to. I promised him that I would leave him my blanket, pillow, and some linen as a souvenir, — he thanked me with emotion in advance.

The censorists were sitting with me. It was getting dark. Mr. Fels was of the opinion that I ought to let the Ministry of War know what sort of a fellow Papritz was, and what kind of conditions prevailed there; Mr. Goldenstein would have liked to let his family have news about him privately, and asked whether I would undertake it; Mr. Fröhlich thought that if I were to write about the jail, I should certainly not mention their real names.

Mr. Wilder came up and described what restaurant he would go to and the food he would order, if there were any prospect of his departing within so short a time.

It was night. I woke up from my sleep. People were breathing, some snored. The light was shining on the ceiling.

Was everything that had happened in Frank's presence, my liberation, Madam M. L., this tomorrow or the day after, — was all this only a dream of mine.

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I raised my head. From a corner a pair of dark eyes gazed at me from a large head, — Dr. Povich-Rosetti. "You happy man, — you can't sleep for joy, eh?" he said.

So it was not a dream. I will go on sleeping.

XXX.

And now everything was unravelled in the same way as it had been entangled.

Saturday passed off without any special incidents. Only Mr. Fels remarked to me towards evening that he did not believe in my release, that the governor had been amusing himself at my expense, — and he remarked this with an undisguised joy, which was easy to understand; in such a cell there is only one person whom a man does not begrudge the excursion to freedom, — and that is himself.

I slept peacefully, I had no dreams.

Sunday.

I rose without haste, during exercise I walked with the engineer who also had doubts about my liberty; I returned to number 60 and did my spell of marching with my batch. Then I sat down on my bed.

And now I began to feel strange. Like a man who in the waiting room of an out-of-the-way station is waiting for a train, which is sure to be very late. Doubts began to arise; who knows, perhaps this Frank, — Mr. Wilder came up to me and remarked that it certainly would not be today, but that he would like to be in my place, it would be tomorrow or the day after for certain.

And the day outside was magnificent. There was a golden flicker in the air, the sky was as blue as the glance of amorous azure eyes, — all my nerves were aquiver with a feverish unrest; and

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when I considered that I should not get out that day, that perhaps it would not be until the next day or even the day after, my eyes and my soul were filled with gloom, and everything within me cried out: It is impossible, I could not endure it.

Half past nine, — at last. To the Tigergasse.

My escort consisted this time of a single person. The superintendent considered that it would be unnecessary for two defence-corps men to be worried; one was enough, he said, but it must be someone of rank. And so I was put in charge of a corporal.

We walked along in friendly conversation slowly, as if we were going for a walk. The corporal cursed the war and asked me how much longer "this madness" was going to last. He had two ham-and-beef shops, — both were closed; he had two sons, — both were in the army, one on the Russian, the other on the Italian front; he himself had been serving for ten months. He was guarding soldiers under arrest. To hell with it all —

We entered the street of the Tigers, number 11, and on the stairs we met a strange Lieutenant-Superintendent, who stopped and asked: "Mr. M?"

I assented.

"Then let's go up. I am on duty today in place of Dr. Frank who is not here, and upon me has devolved the pleasant task of liberating you, master. I am Dr. Schieber."

"Master", — once again "Master".

On the stairs a fat man with a boy came down towards us. He looked at me closely, then he said to the superintendent: "I ought to know this gentleman."

"This gentleman?" remarked Dr. Schieber warmly, "you can hardly know this gentleman; his name perhaps, — it is a name of world-wide renown."

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We were sitting in the well-known room again. How much more agreeable and friendly it now was than it had been during my previous visits.

"A brief report, a few lines, — then you will sign and we shall be finished" said Dr. Schieber as he began to write. Suddenly he stopped: "There are two bottles of wine and a fruit tart from Sacher for you, — where am I to send it?"

"My dear sir, we can drink one bottle at once, — to celebrate this festive Sunday."

He became somewhat embarrassed: "You don't mean it seriously?"

"Why not."

"Then perhaps you don't know that you are being released, but that investigations against you are being continued," he informed me still in embarrassment.

"Oh, in this case it would of course be an attempt to bribe an official; you shall get nothing, I will drink the wine myself. Who left it for me?"

"A commissionaire. He did not say from whom."

"I'll send for it to-morrow."

"Then please sign the report."

I signed and we parted. I assured him that he was the most pleasant of all the superintendents whose acquaintance I had made in the Street of the Tigers, and that it would always be a pleasure to me whenever and wherever I might meet him.

The corporal remarked that the cross-examination had been very short this time. I told him that I had signed a report relating to my release. He showed a sincere interest, and declared that they ought to release the whole jail, and then send the defence-

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corps men home; all this arrangement, he said, was no use, led nowhere, and altogether had no sense.

A magnificent day, a truly magnificent day, How happy were these people, all these strange people in the streets today, how solemnly the trams clattered; whatever can it be that is in the air, in the sky, upon these old, grimy houses! Everything was so happy, everything so festively joyful. You are right, — enjoy yourselves, life is really beautiful after all.

The engineer was waiting in the corridor. Aha, for his inheritance. Well, he shall receive it. Blanket, pillow, linen, — there it is for you, poor fellow; outside, the sun is so golden, happiness is also golden and warm, perhaps these trifles will give you at least a little of what my spirit contains in such abundant measure. He beamed and carried the things off into his cell, — good luck to you.

Kranz also came to say goodbye.

"Kranz, good fellow, thanks for everything. I shan't forget you. And have you anybody there, outside, whom I could help?"

"Nobody. I am alone. But if you would like to do something, send me a postcard here. It will be a souvenir for me" and he dashed out of the room.

Papa Declich was sad. Papa Declich, — a revederci. We shall see each other again and, I hope, soon. They'll release you too, this folly can't last for ever.

They all surrounded me. They wanted me to say a few more words to them.

Good: "Dear criminals!" I comforted and admonished them, pointed to the door through which lead the way out. I pointed myself out to them as an example, and urged them to imitate me. They laughed mournfully and nodded. Mr. Fels ordered Karl to

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uncork the bottles, — we drank each other's healths. Declich had tears in his eyes —

And the warden was already there to take me to the head staff-superintendent.

"Goodbye, goodbye. Papa Declich, addio. Papa Declich, coraggio."

The door closed behind me, the key rattled.

In the office I received my things back. Watch, pocket-book, ring. And I signed accounts, — I drew more than 50 crowns. A grumpy sergeant-major stood up and introduced himself: (I did not catch his name). "On the editorial staff of the *Zeit*". "Pleased to meet you, — aversion to the trenches?" He nodded and smiled.

"Could your order a taxicab for me?"

The head staff-superintendent sent a defence-corps man.

In the next room my box was to be examined. "There's nothing in it, but in my head I have an unwritten book about everything that I have seen and experienced". The superintendent smiled.

I went out of that grey building. For the first time alone; I looked at it, — from the office they were looking back at me, — the head staff-superintendent, the grumpy sergeant-major and some others. My taxicab rattled round the corner.

A few weeks later, somebody rang at my door; it was Papa Declich in the defence-corps uniform.

"Papa Declich, have they discharged you?"

They had discharged him and put him into uniform. And why they had discharged him, he did not know, just as he had not known previously why they had imprisoned him.

"Would you like a cigar?"

J. S. M A C H A R

We sat and smoked. It had been sad when I went, but soon afterwards Dušek had returned to the room. They had brought him back from the Rossau barracks, and were getting ready for his trial.

"And the rest?"

"The censorists have been placed on trial."

"I read about it. Mr. Fels declared during the proceedings, when it was objected that such a sum as 5,000 crowns was not given bona fide to a sergeant-major 'for a benevolent purpose', that today, when millions and milliards are being squandered, 5,000 crowns are a ridiculous trifle."

"And they were condemned to several months which were deducted from the time they had been remanded in custody. Now they are all in military uniforms, but it seems that they won't be in them long and have already discovered a method of taking them off."

"And the engineer?"

"Fallot, fallot", and Papa Declich looked at me with a triumphant glance, the glance of clear-sighted common-sense which was now triumphing over a hoodwinked intellectual."

"The engineer, — a fallot?" I asked again inquisitively, as if I only wanted to defend my lost position; there flitted through my mind everything that I had heard from this man and about him, — his sufferings, the injustice that had been done him, the false accusation of espionage, the long imprisonment, the cross-examinations, his wife, his children, the chains on his feet, — the whole unmerited tragedy of his life.

"The engineer, — a fallot?"

"Yes. He is not an engineer, he never was in the flying corps, he has not two orphans at Chocen —"

THE JAIL

"What is he then?"

"What he is, nobody knows; we only know what he is not and was not. Now he's serving his time at Möllersdorf. Five years, — for theft, — common fraud. Fallot."

I was silent for a while.

"And the rest?"

"Dr. Jonas committed suicide, — a few days after you left. He tore up a sardine tin and swallowed the strips. He suffered ghastly agony. A nervous weakling, — and there was nobody to keep up his spirits after you had gone."

Papa Declich stopped speaking. He was tired with his effort, — as long as he had lived he had not spoken so much for whole weeks and months at a time as in those few minutes.

"And how are you getting on?"

"I'd be glad to go back to number 60" declared Papa Declich emphatically.

Then I received a few postcards from him. From Galicia. Un saluto dalla indimenticabile Galizia. From Odessa; a photograph, — Papa Declich is standing in a military kitchen amongst gigantic basins with a large ladle in his hand; evidently he was company cook.

I will conclude.

The persecution found us unprepared. As a shower of rain comes upon people who have gone for a walk without an umbrella beyond the town. During it, our movements were exceedingly unskilful, and we had to find our way about with an effort.

Today it would be different.

J. S. M A C H A R

Assuredly we all think with horror of those days, weeks and months. If I were to have the choice of passing through them again or of having my leg cut off at the knee, I would say without hesitation: the leg. But this does not mean that I would move a finger or would cringe for the purpose of evading and escaping the danger if it were to arise again. No. That's what we are here for.

But assuredly not one of us regards this suffering as a merit. By chance it came upon us, as by chance it might have come upon others. And we did nothing more than the man who was surprised by a shower of rain and was without an umbrella, — we got wet through. The romanticism of "martyrdom" is now a thing of the past. It would be an extremely passive glory if anyone wished to glorify us on this account. There is only one thing we can do for ourselves: to try and forget and give the others a helping hand with their work.

But for all that, the members of our nation must not forget. Not for our sakes, but for theirs. It was they who were to have been hit, it was they who were aimed at. And they feel it and will not forget. We see this and believe.

For that reason, and for that reason alone, it is a good thing to relate what was experienced there by us, the nation's atoms, its units.

And that we, inexperienced as we were, nevertheless did not soil its shield and its honour there, — that too is not a merit, but an obvious duty towards ourselves.

No merit whatever then?

None whatever.

The age of romantic martyrdom is over. And woe to the nation which would glorify the bearers of such chance and passive merits.

T H E J A I L

Honour is due only to them who went forth in darkness and
staked everything upon their labours.

Completed August 27th 1918.

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**DO NOT REMOVE
SLIP FROM POCKET**

